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STEREOTYPES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN AS LEADERS  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Education

By

Kimberly Jean Hoeritz

August 2013

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Kimberly Jean Hoeritz

2013

***Duquesne University***  
***School of Education***  
***Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program for***  
***Educational Leaders***

***Dissertation***

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

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**June 3, 2013**

STEREOTYPES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN AS LEADERS  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

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## ABSTRACT

### STEREOTYPES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN AS LEADERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

By

Kimberly Jean Hoeritz

August 2013

Dissertation supervised by James E. Henderson, Ed.D.

Women are underrepresented as leaders in most facets of American work life. While present in fields that are traditionally feminine, there is a scarcity of women leaders in all other occupations including business, government, science and technology, agriculture, education in general and higher education in particular. While women currently comprise the majority of our enrolled college students as well as our graduates, they are not present as leaders among those responsible for running our colleges and universities. Women hold 23% of presidential positions, 31% of executive vice president roles, 38% of chief academic officer positions, and 36% of deanships. Women are much more likely to hold positions as directors of human resources (70%), continuing education (65%), community services (60%), and chief diversity officer (56%).

Eagly and Karau (2002) suggest that the paucity of women leaders is due in part to gender role stereotypes. Women are stereotypically viewed as warm, caring, and nurturing as well as indecisive, emotional, and passive and have earned this reputation due to the role they've played in society. These stereotypes, however, carry over into the workplace, and women are not viewed as having the qualities necessary to be leaders, as leaders are considered to be decisive, rational, and strong. Eagly and Karau's role congruity theory of prejudice toward women leaders states that a prejudice toward women leaders develops due to the incongruity between the two stereotypes, and, as a result, women will have less access to leadership opportunities and will face greater obstacles as they enact leadership roles.

This dissertation presents a qualitative study intended to explore the impact of stereotypes on women as leaders in higher education administration. A multiple case study design was employed, and three women leaders below the levels of president, chief academic officer, and dean were interviewed. The semi-structured interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded for themes as the responses related to the research questions. The findings of this study confirm the presence of stereotypes in the settings in which the women worked, and these stereotypes resulted in the expectation that the women behave in accordance with their gender role. When seeking leadership roles, the women were passed over in favor of men who were equally or less qualified. While enacting leadership roles, they were challenged, criticized, and were subject to acts of retaliation and discrimination. In summary, their experiences mirrored the consequences for women leaders that Eagly and Karau (2002) describe.

## DEDICATION

To all women who have suffered the consequences of being  
stereotyped because they are women.

I, too, have been silenced and yearn for the day when women can speak openly  
without fear of discrimination, sexual harassment, or retaliation.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank the women who shared their stories with me. I extend my gratitude to you for your strength and perseverance and for being excellent role models not only for younger women but also for all who care and pay attention to issues of equity and social justice.

To my family, Patty, Steve, and Dominick Borushko, Roberta Conlon, William Kennedy, Amy Vogel, Michael and Lisa Masucci, Paulette and Bob Scholl, Dennis and Kathy Hoeritz, and Jackson Forsythe and Leah Meyers—I also extend my thanks for doing without me for many years now so that I could focus on my studies. You have been an inspiration, and I hope I’ve made you very proud. I include here my mom and dad, Doris and Wilmer Hoeritz, and two sisters, Edith Forsythe and Deborah Hoeritz, who are deceased. Although you are not here in the flesh, you nonetheless continue to inspire me, and I think of you every day.

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Wendy Gitas—you are my cheering section, and your constant support and encouragement made all the difference.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Nearly 50 years ago, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 barred discrimination in hiring and promotion based on sex, and the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 focused specifically on equity in education based on gender. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 made it illegal to pay women and men different wages for the same work, while 46 years later, it took the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 to address problems in the law that still resulted in unfair treatment of women with regard to pay equity. In the mid 1990s, the federal government was called upon once again to address the underrepresentation of specific groups of individuals—women being one of them—in leadership roles in our nation’s private sector. Gender-based differences are present in higher education as well, with women still holding the disadvantaged position (Dominici, Fried, & Zeger, 2009). While programs and initiatives have been enacted on our college campuses resulting in improved conditions for women, there persists an underlying value system which holds women at bay and perpetuates a cycle of male advantage and female disadvantage (National Council for Research on Women, 2006). Examples of the female disadvantage in higher education include lower salaries, presence at lower seniority levels, appointments at lower ranks, slower rates of promotion, less recognition through awards, lower retention, and prominence in stereotyped roles.

Sex stereotypes are defined as a set of beliefs about the personal attributes of women and men (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1979), and according to Top (1991), these beliefs can stem from cognitive, and motivational, as well as cultural bases. Stereotypes assist in making sense of things and influence what we believe, what we do, and how we

react. Descriptive stereotypes connote beliefs about the way people are, while prescriptive stereotypes convey messages about the way people should be. When viewed in the context of gender, women are considered to be kind, passive, gentle, warm, and caring but are also expected to behave according to these standards. Leaders, on the other hand, are described as aggressive, in control, dominant, and decisive—traits not stereotypically associated with women. Inherently, then, is present a dilemma which situates women outside of the role of leader. It is precisely the impact of stereotypes on women's leadership roles and potential in higher education that will be researched and discussed as the focus of this paper.

Discrimination is illegal, but blatant discrimination has been replaced by more subtle forms of discrimination, and stereotyping is one of them (Task Force on Women in Academe, 2000). Issues of gender equity are not unique to the United States. Research in other countries worldwide shows evidence of the devaluation of women. Morley's (2006) study found evidence in South Africa, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, and Tanzania of male favoritism, a failure to promote women, and the isolation of women. Women in higher education in England shared that they, too, had faced sexism and discrimination and suffered the negative consequences of being female in a male's world (Coleman, 2009). Imposing stereotyped beliefs about gender-based characteristics and traits, which also reflect strengths and weaknesses, whether implicit or explicit, alters how women are perceived, limits the view held of them, and restricts their movement upward. Bem and Bem (1970) refer to stereotyping as a

...nonconscious ideology, a set of beliefs and attitudes which he accepts implicitly but which remain outside his awareness because alternative conceptions



of the world remain unimagined....In our view, there is no ideology which better exemplifies these points than the beliefs and attitudes which most Americans hold about women. These beliefs, while subtle in practice, are most effective at "keeping her [a woman] in her place." (p. 89)

Limited research has been conducted on the ways in which work place structures and practices inherent within organizations combine with stereotypes to the detriment of women (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011). It is known that discrimination exists. This researcher's challenge was to uncover why and to identify the elements, factors, and circumstances associated with stereotypes that are present in the higher education work place and continue to impose inequalities for women.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Women are underrepresented in leadership roles despite their participation in higher education, their prominence in the work place, and their investment in human capital. While the U.S. Department of Labor has changed definitions of position classifications over the years which make comparisons invalid, there still has been an increase in the presence of women over time. In 1985, under the category "Management, professional, and related occupations," 33.3% of the labor force was female, and this increased to 38.7% by 1995. The current definition yielded 48.8% participation by women in 2000 which increased to 51.4% in 2011 (Catalyst, 2012c, April). However, when the participation of women is examined more closely, one sees that women currently hold only 3.8% of Fortune 500 CEO positions and 4% of Fortune 1000 CEO positions (Catalyst, 2012, June). In 2011, women made up 32% of lawyers but only 15% of equity partners, and it is estimated to take more than a woman lawyer's lifetime to

reach equity in law employment (Catalyst, 2012d, April). Also in 2011, women were grossly underrepresented in managerial roles in industries including utilities (23%), mining (12%), construction (9%), and agriculture (8%) (Catalyst, 2012a, April).

In higher education, by the late 1970s, women comprised 51% of undergraduates, 49% of graduate students, and 25% of faculty and professional staff (Kerr, 1982). By 1980, more women than men were enrolled in college, and women have since maintained the majority of our enrolled college students (as cited in Touchton, Musil, & Campbell, 2008). By 1995, women were earning more undergraduate and master's degrees than men, and since 2002, when counting only U.S. citizens, women have earned the majority of doctorates (Touchton et al., 2008). Despite these high levels of college participation by women, their presence is diminished when looking at the leadership of our colleges and universities. Women lead only 23% of our nation's institutions, and when broken down by institution type, they hold only 14% of presidential appointments and 23% of provost/chief academic officer (CAO) positions at doctoral-granting universities (King & Gomez, 2008). Given that the CAO position is the most common pathway to the presidency, the pipeline for this path is certainly not full for women. Eckel, Cook, and King (2009) reported that while the number of females at the CAO level increases as the institution type moves from doctoral to two-year, the importance of that role decreases at school types for which women are most prominently represented.

King and Gomez (2008) reported that 45% of our senior administrators are women, but, again, when examined more closely, women are pocketed into certain roles and are more prevalent as leaders as the prestige of the institution decreases. Across all institution types, women are prominent as heads of human resources offices (70%),

directors of continuing education (65%) and community service (60%), and chief diversity officers (56%). By institution type, women make up 52% of senior administrators at two-year schools but only 34% at doctoral-granting institutions (King & Gomez, 2008).

The problem is one of equal representation of women in leadership roles, and this condition is prevalent and persistent across industries and occupations. Stereotyping contributes to the lack of women in leadership positions as well as their prominence in stereotypically feminine roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). With regard to higher education, the progress of women is colored by the "persistent, organized effort to undermine equity progress on many fronts in the courts, legislatures, state referendums, and on college campuses themselves" (Touchton et al., 2008, p. 1). According to Valian (1998), hiring and promotion patterns present limited opportunities for women, and, among faculty, the pipeline is clogged and has become a reservoir into which women are "gathered in pools like the run-off from a storm drain" (Touchton et al., 2008, p. 22). Maintaining the status quo among leaders on our campuses has prevented women from ascending to positions of authority. White males have historically held the power in higher education and continue to do so (as cited in Owen, 2009, p. 192). In our culture, being White and being a man serve to provide an identity and a social location that are privileged in relation to women and minorities, and this privilege is embedded in our social, cultural, political and educational contexts. However, to White males, it is unseen and simply constitutes the norm (Owen, 2009). According to Bilimoria, Joy, and Liang (2008), the institution as a whole must evaluate and address its culture and examine routines and practices that are embedded in the fabric of the organization. One of the areas proposed by Bilimoria et al.

for exploration is the stereotyping of women.

### **Significance of the Problem**

Despite equal opportunity laws and affirmative action programs dating back to the 1960s, the underrepresentation and exclusion of women, particularly in leadership positions, remains a widespread problem (Bilimoria, Joy, & Liang, 2008). Women in the higher education workplace experience lower earnings, fewer promotions, lower status jobs, and lack of power and authority (Lindsay, 1999). In the United States, men have the advantages of higher pay and faster promotions, while women earn only 81 cents for each dollar a man earns (Eagly & Carli, 2007). White men were found more likely to attain managerial positions, and, even in traditionally female fields such as nursing and education, rose more quickly to administrative positions than did women (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Johnsrud (1991) suggests that, since education and experience are similar between men and women, those making hiring and promotion decisions may use other criteria when evaluating candidates. Controlling for variables that play a part in these decisions, Johnsrud states the difficulty in avoiding the conclusion that the attitudes of the decision makers are working to the detriment of women.

Discrimination is still present, and Kulis (1997) discusses a form of discrimination, namely statistical discrimination, which is characterized by stereotyping or generalizing about an individual based on assumptions made about that person's gender (or racial) group. "Bias and stereotyping on the part of White men in power are held to account for the slow progress of women and minorities" (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1995, p. 171). Because males benefit from the existing structures, policies, and practices, there is resistance on their part to change (Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998).

Given this premise, women may perceive that organizations create and/or tolerate obstacles that prevent their inclusion or advancement contributing further to their disadvantage. To complicate the issue even more, research indicates that the majority group members are often unaware of the privileges they are afforded due to their status (or gender, in this case), which may create the perception of support for discriminatory practices (Barak et al., 1998).

Fewer women in leadership roles is also problematic in that institutional decisions and policy-making which impact not only the administration of the institutions but also, and more importantly, its students, are one-sided reflecting only the male majority outlook. Women should be included in upper ranks. Women's contributions and experiences should be incorporated into the fiber of how our organizations determine priorities and execute our responsibilities. As a matter of social justice, the viewpoints of the underrepresented and marginalized populations should be heard. Research has shown that female and minority students each benefit from the interaction and influence of female and minority faculty and administrators (Konrad & Pfeffer, 1991). Grades were higher as was participation in an academic curriculum, and female and minority authority figures made positive influences in their students' lives.

Maintenance of the status quo will become more problematic as the demographics of our nation change. We need to understand the reasons for underrepresentation from the woman's vantage point, and this paper is an attempt to pursue an analysis of a social system of inequality that favors certain groups above others. "These culturally shared and culturally enacted ideas are perhaps the largest kind of self-fulfilling prophecy because they legitimize themselves and the unequal social systems of which they are a part"

(Pratto, Stallworth, Sidanius, & Siers, 1997, p. 51).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which stereotypes contribute to the lack of women in leadership roles in higher education. More specifically, this research will target female leaders in higher education administration below the levels of president, provost, and dean and for whom very little existing research could be uncovered. The aim of this study was to explore the extent to which the expectation of adherence to stereotypes by women is manifested and contributes to their slow progression into leadership roles. The study sought to uncover how gender-appropriate behavior is enforced through structures, expectations, and interactions at work.

In 1985, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) made gender equity in education a priority and established gender equity outcomes such that

...both females and males acquire the most valued characteristics and skills...so that fewer jobs, roles, activities, expectations, and achievements are differentiated by gender; sex segregation in education and society caused by gender stereotyping and other inappropriate discriminatory factors is reduced; and there is decreased use of gender stereotyping in decision-making about individuals.

(Klein et al., 1994, p. 13)

Twenty-two years later, Klein et al., (2007) still point to the discrimination of women in leadership as a persistent obstacle to achieving gender equity, and this study sought to explore the persistence of this dilemma.

As stated by Twombly and Rosser (2002), "the institution can impose certain restraints (subtle or overt) on individuals by defining their identity and influencing

behavioral patterns acceptable to the cultural and political activities within the organization" (p. 465). In this context, it was intended to explore (a) the ways in which gender role expectations and stereotypes are manifest in a higher education setting, and (b) how this setting reduces access and increases challenges for women's success as leaders as a result of gender role expectations and associated stereotypes.

### **Research Questions**

In order to explore the presence, uses, and impacts of stereotypes on women's ability to assume and maintain leadership roles, the following research questions were posed:

- In what ways do women in higher education experience conflict between gender and leadership roles and associated stereotypes?
- In what ways does the incongruity between gender and leader roles diminish opportunities for women to assume leadership positions?
- In what ways does this incongruity create additional obstacles for women in leadership roles?

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks**

This study combined a conceptual organizational framework proposed by Ely and Padavic (2007) with a theoretical framework posited by Eagly and Karau (2002) as described in their role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. The work of Ely and Padavic (2007) describes gendering as a dynamic, ongoing process of socialization that is managed and debated in significant ways in the work place. The organization makes apparent preferred ways of being which align themselves with gender roles and color expected and appropriate behavior in the workplace. Eagly and Karau's

(2002) role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders describes the ways in which gender roles and associated stereotypes disadvantage women leaders. Based on expectations and stereotypes associated with gender roles, women cannot be both leaders and women, as the behaviors expected of each are incongruous. The expectation and failure to conform to gender roles result in prejudice against women leaders culminating in diminished access and greater obstacles on the path to leadership.

Eagly and Karau's (2002) role congruity theory of prejudice toward women leaders (hereafter referred to as "role congruity theory") states that female gender roles are in conflict with leadership stereotypes. The behaviors expected of women are communal, supportive, affectionate, passive, and gentle. To the contrary, the behaviors expected of leaders are assertive, controlling, aggressive, dominant and ambitious. These latter behaviors are more often associated with men than with women. The stereotypes of men and leaders are aligned, while the stereotype of women is contrary to the stereotype of leaders. According to Eagly and Karau (2002), this conflict results in two forms of prejudice against women leaders: (a) a less favorable assessment of women's potential for leadership, since leadership ability is stereotypically male, and, (b) a less favorable assessment of the actual behavior of female leaders, because such behavior is less desirable in women than in men. This theory suggests that the resulting prejudice will be evident in two ways: Women will have less access to leadership roles, and women in leadership roles will have more obstacles to overcome in order to be successful in those roles.

This theory is situated in the context of Ely and Padavic's (2007) conception of the organization as one that shapes and directs the gender identification of individuals.



Ely and Padavic (2007) contend that there are links between organizational features and gendered patterns of behavior. This study also explored the conditions under which stereotypical behavior is expected and promoted in the higher education setting. If these organizations encourage the expectation of traditional female gender roles, and if stereotypes of women hinder their ability to become leaders, then the organization itself becomes an obstacle for women who seek or hold leadership positions.

Combining this conceptual framework, which suggests that organizations are gendered and convey messages of preference for conformity to gender roles, with role congruity theory, which suggests that the leadership stereotype is incongruous with the female gender role, situates women in a disadvantaged position with regard to leadership. Hence, this study explored the impact of stereotypes on women leaders and the outcomes of these expectations on women's ability to enter and maintain leadership roles. Forced into stereotypical behavior, female leaders were asked to describe how the expectation of conformity to stereotypes led to experiences of lessened potential for leadership development or lessened approval of actual leadership behavior.

### **Significance of the Study**

According to Morley and Walsh (1996), "higher education is a pivotal institution in society and the consequences of women's underrepresentation in positions of authority have wider and more serious resonances for issues of equity, social justice and participation in public life" (p. 4). Few studies have been completed that explore administrative leadership in higher education, and additional research is needed which examines the higher education cultural landscape and identifies the means by which gender role expectations continue to create and sustain barriers for women as they seek

leadership (Rosser, 2003). Studies of presidents (Cook & Kim, 2012; Eddy, 2009; King & Gomez, 2008), provosts (Eckel, Cook, & King, 2009), and deans (Rosser, 2003) have been conducted, but the objective was not to evaluate their experiences of stereotyping. Likewise, studies of administrators conducted by Johnsrud and Rosser (1999), Volkwein and Parmley (2000), and Scott (1980) focused generally on job satisfaction and morale. While discrimination surfaced as a variable that negatively impacted morale and satisfaction, no studies focusing distinctly on discrimination or stereotyping of administrators could be uncovered. The first and only national study of women and minorities as higher education administrators (Moore, 1983) used quantitative methods to reveal that women and minorities were sorely underrepresented and concluded by declaring that “the paucity of women and minorities in administrative positions has serious implications for the functioning of institutions of higher learning” (Moore, 1983, p. 3). This study was intended to fill a gap which exists in exploring the condition of women administrators relative to underlying conditions that contribute to their underrepresentation in leadership roles.

To increase the representation of women and minorities at higher levels of management, organizations must identify obstacles to their advancement. Exploring the presence and use of stereotypes along with preconceived notions about women's strengths and abilities will aid in revealing the ways in which women are oppressed and will create an awareness of the legacy and subtleties inherent in these organizations (Buzzanell, 1992). According to Reskin (2003), there is plenty of research describing why discrimination exists but not enough explaining how. This study attempted to isolate the mechanisms through which gender inequalities are created and sustained through the use

of gender stereotypes and their impact on leadership. Identifying these mechanisms is important in the quest for equality. "Recognizing the root causes of the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions—that is, the gender stereotypes that inform cultural assumptions about leadership potential and effectiveness—is the first concrete step toward the elimination of the obstacles women face" (Dominici, Fried, & Zeger, 2009, p.26).

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of the Literature**

To look more closely at the state of women as leaders in higher education and how stereotypes confound their position, the literature review is presented in four broad categories. The first section introduces the concept of stereotypes, defines the stereotypes of women, men, and leaders, provides evidence supporting the use of stereotypes, and offers confirmation that their use is present even today. The second section describes women in the workplace along with associated gender and occupational stereotypes, how the imposition of stereotypes at work has constrained opportunities for women, and how these elements coalesce to create organizations that resultantly become obstacles for women. The third section focuses on women and leadership, addresses leadership stereotypes specifically, and discusses leadership style and effectiveness. The fourth and final section is devoted to women in higher education. To contextualize the story, a history of women in higher education is presented, followed by descriptions of current conditions, stereotyping and discrimination in higher education, and the role and position of women leaders in higher education.

### **Stereotypes**

A stereotype is a structured set of beliefs about the personal attributes of a group of people (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1979). These beliefs, which can be positive or negative, represent a gross generalization that the characterizations apply not only to the group as a whole but also to each individual in the group. Stereotyping entails associating the perceived characteristics of a stereotyped group with an individual based on that individual's membership in the stereotyped group. In his groundbreaking work on the

subject, Allport (1954) discusses the process of categorization and describes it as one that is needed to organize and manage one's daily life. Its usefulness is present as we generalize occurrences into classes or clusters to reasonably manage the events in our lives from day to day. Allport (1954) describes this as reframing new experiences to fit into existing categories, and "once formed, categories are the basis for normal prejudgment" (Allport, 1954, p. 19). Categorization is also described as a mental process designed by necessity to rapidly identify and assimilate events or activities into clusters and to use the generalizations to prejudge and make sense of a situation. These conclusions, therefore, impact "what we see, how we judge, and what we do" (Allport, 1954, p. 21). In addition to beliefs, these categories also elicit emotion and may or may not be rational in their outcome.

Allport's (1954) discussion of categorization is framed in the context of prejudice, which is defined as a disposition of favor or disfavor related to an over-generalized belief coupled with a corresponding positive or negative attitude. The acting out of a negative prejudice results in discrimination and the exclusion of the prejudged group from social norms, activities, and opportunities. Stereotypes parallel prejudice in the sense that they represent a generalization about a group of people and may serve to advantage or disadvantage the group they represent. Like Allport (1954), Ashmore and Del Boca (1979) describe stereotypes as an individual's tendency to reduce the social environment into "natural" groups, which are defined and recognizable based on a set of easily identifiable cues. Within the group, all members are considered to be the same. Once the association with the group has been established, the perceiver will ascribe traits to an individual on the basis of the traits associated with (or the stereotype of) the group as a

whole. Concomitantly, stereotypes can influence the behavior of both the perceiver and the target. The perceiver is likely to behave in a manner that is aligned with the stereotype, while the target may behave accordingly or may respond in a way that challenges the stereotype. Behavior consistent with the stereotype reinforces the belief in it and is considered to be the result of one's ability. When behavior or outcomes are inconsistent with the stereotype, the result is attributed to luck (Deaux, 1995).

Summarily, individuals are judged based on the expectations associated with their group, and stereotypes serve as the standard against which this judgment takes place (Biernat, 2003).

Stereotyping disadvantages the individuals who are associated with a negatively stereotyped group. Campbell (1967) describes the impact of negative stereotyping as resulting in oppression, segregation, lack of upward mobility, and exclusion from the larger society. On an individual level, the effects of stereotyping wear at one's aspirations, effort, and personality. Embedded in the complexity and negativity of stereotypes are the underlying problematic circumstances that the perceiver actually believes the target is as perceived, while the perceiver does not recognize his or her own contributions toward the beliefs.

Techniques for identifying stereotypes include three: the adjective checklist, ratings of photos, and ratings of statements (Cauthen, Robinson, & Krauss, 1971). The adjective checklist was a tool developed by Katz and Braly (1933) and used by subjects to identify characteristics they associated with groups. The adjectives were then reduced to a list of those most commonly associated with a group. The adjective checklist as applied to gender stereotypes was first utilized by Williams and Bennett (1975) and was

deemed “a promising method for the definition and study of sex stereotypes” (p. 327). In addition to predefined lists, free-response and sentence-completion tools have been utilized to isolate attributes associated with stereotypes. The second type of evaluative tool involves the use of photographs which are paired with labels and rated on a like-dislike scale or, again, associated with a list of traits. The third assessment tool involves rating whether certain statements apply to certain groups.

According to Ashmore and Del Boca (1979), stereotypes are made of three components which are (a) a social category, (b) personal attributes, and (c) inferential relations. The social category identifies the stereotyped group and places it within a societal context. Any number of personal attributes may be associated with the group and with each individual in the group, and behaviors and expectations are inferred based on the assumed personal attributes. Cauthen et al's. (1971) review of the literature reveals that stereotypes are considered to have four dimensions. The first refers to content or the traits associated with the stereotype, and these attributes have remained relatively stable and recognizable over time (Holt & Ellis, 1998; Spence & Buckner, 2000). The second dimension addresses uniformity or the frequency with which traits are assigned to a group. Intensity is the third dimension and refers to the social desirability or favorability of the stereotype. The final dimension is direction and reflects a favorable or unfavorable ranking of the stereotype. These four dimensions work together in varied strengths and varying levels of positivity or negativity. With regard to favorable and unfavorable traits, preferred groups are attributed with the favorable traits, while unfavorable traits are assigned to the disapproved groups.

## **Evidence of Stereotypes**

Stereotypes are prevalent and persistent (Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, & Heilman, 1991; Spence & Buckner, 2000), and recent research points to the elicitation of stereotypes as an automatic response (Devine & Sharp, 2009; Gilbert & Hixon, 1991). Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, and Heilman (1991) describe how the validity of stereotypes was confirmed after a favorable ruling by the Supreme Court in 1989 in the case *Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins*, the first such case of its kind. As recently as 2000, Spence and Buckner (2000) confirmed the presence of stereotypes despite attitudinal changes in current society. Devine and Sharp (2009) discuss the automaticity of stereotypes and how controlling mechanisms can be ineffective or even non-existent, while Gilbert and Hixon (1991) replicated these results.

In a relevant study, Banaji and Hardin (1996) observed stereotypical responses in both gender-relevant and gender-neutral settings and independent of individuals' personal stereotype beliefs. Amodio and Lieberman (2009) described the successful use of MRIs to identify areas in the brain that are associated with implicit prejudice and stereotyping. Devine (1989) explored the relationship between knowledge of a stereotype relative to one's personal beliefs and how these two conditions may or may not overlap. The investigation involved the analysis of automatic or involuntary responses which are considered to be spontaneous judgments based on knowledge about a stereotyped group against controlled responses of an individual which require thought and examination. The ability to control a response requires that the automatic activation of a stereotype is recognized and halted and then evaluated against one's personal belief system. The premise of the research was that, regardless of the level of prejudice toward a stereotyped



group, if a low-prejudice person is not aware that an automatic response has been activated, their basic knowledge of the stereotype can influence their response even if their personal belief system is contrary to the stereotyped knowledge. Study results concluded that high- and low-prejudiced individuals are equally knowledgeable of cultural stereotypes. Results also indicated that when automatic responses are not recognized, both persons high and low in levels of prejudice respond in prejudice-like ways. Conversely, when high- and low-prejudiced individuals were asked to consciously evaluate subjects from stereotyped groups, the low-prejudice group's response did not reflect stereotyped beliefs, while the high-prejudiced group's response did. In other words, controlled processing inhibits the automatic and stereotypical response. The requisite conclusion is that reducing or eliminating the automatic and prejudiced response in low-prejudice individuals requires intentional and cognitive recognition that the stereotype has been activated and that the personal belief system be called upon to replace the stereotype. If this controlled response is not activated, the stereotyped judgment will remain intact.

Another possible explanation for the persistence of stereotypes is described by Ashmore and Del Boca (1979) such that perceivers may pay particular attention to feedback or responses that are consistent with the stereotype thus strengthening it. Contrarily, if a person responds in a way that challenges a stereotype, the perceiver may simply shift the target to a new category of stereotype. A condition that may mask the existence of stereotypes is described by Biernat and Fuegen (2001) as the shifting standard. This model proposes a shifting standard when like members of a negatively stereotyped group are being evaluated. The argument is that standards are lowered for

this group because the stereotype of the group already puts the group at a disadvantage.

The result is that because of the lower standard, a stereotyped group member may appear to exceed expectations. This condition gives the misperception that no stereotype is at work, since the disadvantaged group member is not recognized as being representative of the stereotype. While in an evidentiary manner it appears as though no stereotype exists, the premise of the condition rests on the fact that a stereotype does indeed exist.

Disadvantaging stereotyped groups even further is Biernat's (2003) extended argument that, while minimum standards are lowered for stereotyped groups, a stereotyped individual's demonstration of a particular attribute must exceed normal or typical levels as evidence of competency. In other words, "perceivers actually hold devalued group members to both low minimum standards and high standards to confirm unexpected traits" (Biernat, 2003, p. 1023).

Hepburn's (1985) proposition that existing stereotypic beliefs impact the processing of information in a manner that perpetuates stereotypes was confirmed. Study results showed that stereotypic beliefs impact the recollection of events and behaviors and that these beliefs bias individuals' memories. This overestimation is proposed to have an inflated impact on one's stereotypic beliefs thereby supporting and perpetuating them. Moreover, these beliefs can be explicit or implicit (Deaux & Major, 1987). Lane, Goh, and Driver-Linn (2012) discuss the notion of explicit (verbalized or self-reported) and implicit (underlying and not evident) stereotypes in their study of women's and men's career plans. In this study, men choose career paths in science, while women's choice was humanities. This explicit stereotype is obvious, while implicit stereotypes are not. In line with the notion that stereotypes are embedded in our cognitive processes, Lane et

al.'s (2012) study showed that when the implicit stereotypes were controlled for, the differences in gender-based career choices disappeared.

### **Gender Stereotypes**

The study of gender stereotypes evolved from similar studies on race and ethnicity (D. T. Campbell, 1967; Katz & Braly, 1933), and Bakan (1966) is credited with describing masculine characteristics as agentic and female characteristics as communal. Specifically, men are described as agentic, which translates to being assertive, having the urge to master, and repressing feeling and impulse, while women are described as communal—being at one with others, lacking repression, and behaving in a spirit of union and cooperation. Bakan (1966) describes this division as evolving from the social roles of the sexes and a social structure in which males and females take on appropriate roles. Consensus about the differences between men and women was documented early on by Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, and Rosenkrantz (1972) who stated that sex role standards and expectations influence the self-concept and drive the behaviors of men and women, and these standards delineate appropriate and acceptable behavior for each of the sexes. Earlier results from a sex role stereotype questionnaire (Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman, & Broverman, 1968) revealed several noteworthy findings. The first was agreement between the sexes and across age, religion, marital status, and education levels on the nature of the differences between men and women. Secondly, male characteristics, which entail competence, were more highly valued than the warmth and expressive characteristics associated with females. Thirdly, these sex role differences were accepted and integrated into the self-concepts of men and women such that they influence individual behavior and the behavior expected of others on the basis of their

sex.

With regard to these gender stereotypes, women were described as passive, subjective, emotional, excitable, illogical, dependent, lacking in self-confidence, ambition and competitiveness, not skilled in business, and unable to make decisions or act like a leader. Men on the other hand were described as aggressive, independent, dominant, logical, competent, adventurous, objective, self-confident, ambitious, and skilled in decision making and business and leadership realms (Broverman, et al., 1972).

Furthermore, men found it undesirable for women to possess masculine traits. Williams' and Bennett's (1975) work again confirmed agreement by both sexes on adjectives used to describe men and women while lending validity to the adjective checklist as a measure of sex stereotyping. Adjectives associated with women included affected, affectionate, dependent, emotional, excitable, fickle, frivolous, high-strung, meek, mild, sensitive, sentimental, submissive, weak, and whiny. Adjectives associated with men included adventurous, aggressive, ambitious, assertive, coarse, confident, courageous, dominant, enterprising, forceful, independent, logical, rational, self-confident, stable, steady, strong, tough, and unemotional. Bem's (1974) study, focusing on the social desirability of certain traits, described stereotypical characteristics of women and men similarly; Men were described as aggressive, ambitious, analytical, competitive, dominant, forceful, independent, self-sufficient, and as having leadership abilities. Women were described as affectionate, childlike, compassionate, gentle, gullible, sensitive, soft-spoken, tender, and yielding.

A subtle but important distinction should be made between the two kinds of assumptions underlying the stereotypes described above, and these speak to the nature of

the stereotype. *Descriptive* stereotypes describe how people are, while *prescriptive* stereotypes describe how people should be. So, while a woman may be described as compassionate and sensitive, she is also expected to *be* compassionate and sensitive. It is the prescriptive component of stereotyping and its place among the social desirability of expected behaviors that can create more dissonance (Heilman, 2001). When women, for example, do not behave as they “should” and in line with appropriate gender roles, discrimination and marginalization can be a result (Davey, 2008; Foschi, 1996; Glick, 1991).

Stereotypes have evolved from the roles that men and women play in society (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000; Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Steffen, 1984). The attributes ascribed to men and women represent the characteristics associated with these roles. Men typically had been in the workforce, so stereotypes of them as assertive, rational, dominant, and as leaders developed. Women’s longstanding role as homemaker resulted in a stereotype that reflects compassion, concern for others, emotionality, and subjectivity. Inherently, stereotypes reflect gender differences as they are manifest in traditional social roles as well as power inequities between men and women (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Put another way, gender roles have emerged as a result of the social positions of men and women. Attributes associated with men and women relative to their strengths and weaknesses have evolved from generalizations made about the sexes as a result of the roles they play and the work they do in society. These generalizations, which become stereotypes, then guide behavior toward the sexes (Wood & Eagly, 2002).

Sex typing is the process by which a male learns what is masculine and a female what is feminine (Bem, 1981). All societies ascribe certain attributes to each gender and

expect their children to do the same. Socialization is the process by which children learn the values of their society, and stereotypes are conveyed through socialization (Stangor, 2009). Children learn the specific behaviors that are associated with each sex, and as they learn the behaviors associated with sex roles, they are inclined to call upon them when viewing the larger society. Socialization teaches children to support traditional roles, promotes the division of labor, and maintains a hierarchy between the sexes (Wood & Eagly, 2002). Messages are conveyed not only of expected behaviors but also of a distinct difference between male and female. In their view of society, some people are more likely to use gender as an organizing principle and to organize their reality based on gender (Frale & Bem, 1985). Frale and Bem (1985) refer to these individuals as "sex-typed," organizing people into masculine and feminine categories. Those who are sex-typed are quick to endorse gender-appropriate behavior and to reject counter-normal behavior. When we meet people, we take information in. We recognize their sex and may use that information to make assumptions about the type of individual they are.

"Knowing whether someone is male or female serves a psychological need in that the classification provides us with certain basic information, expectations, and shared cultural assumptions about that individual" (Katz, 1979, p. 155). The development of the sex-role and gender identity is the most significant of all socialization processes (as cited in Katz, 1979, p. 156).

Despite the continued presence of stereotypes (Holt & Ellis, 1998; Prentice & Carranza, 2002), very little empirical evidence exists that confirms any differences in the cognitive abilities or personality traits of women and men (Basow, 1986; Deaux, 1984). When it comes to learning, memory, and intellectual and analytical ability, no significant

gender differences have been established. However, some small differences have been identified. Females have superior verbal and in some cases creative skills, while males have superior quantitative skills. It should be stressed that in all cases, the differences, while significant, were small. With regard to personality traits and social behavior, only aggression and dominance in communication were greater in males. The presence of other traits and behavior, such as nurturance, empathy, altruism, competitiveness, and compliance, vary and were impacted considerably for both sexes based on either context alone or on a combination of both context and gender role.

### **The Persistence of Gender Stereotypes**

Despite the lack of evidence of real differences in the cognitive abilities or personality traits between men and women, stereotypes continue to exist and to impact the treatment of women. Roles associated with gender have kept stereotypes alive (Hoffman & Hurst, 1990), and the propensity of group members to align their beliefs consistently in order to maintain group identity (Dasgupta, 2009) also aids in the persistence of stereotypes. Assumptions have been made about personality traits as aligned with suitable roles, and stereotypes persist as a way of rationalizing the division of labor between the sexes. At the same time, the focus has shifted from the ways in which women and men actually differ to the ways in which people think they differ (Deaux, 1984). It is perception that brings forward evidence of differences between women and men, and some of these differences are attributed to situational factors as well as expectations of performance. Pairing perception and the negative impact of stereotypes, a study conducted by Biernat and Danaher (2012) provided evidence that a negatively stereotyped group will interpret the same feedback received by both positively

and negatively stereotyped groups in a negative way.

Attitudes toward the roles of women have changed over the years (Twenge, 1997). The Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS) (Spence & Helmreich, 1972), an instrument used to measure the attitudes of women in contemporary society, provides historical data on the perception of women's roles. Scores were compared from 1970 through 1995, and gender differences were shown to have increased from 1970 to 1985 and then to have decreased from 1986 to 1995 (Twenge, 1997). Additionally, the magnitude of the differences between the social desirability of masculine versus feminine traits has also declined (Holt & Ellis, 1998). Reasons for change include the younger generation's having had mothers who work, or having been raised in a single-parent household, as well as the influence of a new set of attitudes arising from the women's movement. Additionally, the younger population may have a more liberal attitude about gender roles. It is also postulated that wanting to give socially desirable responses may have colored these results in more recent years. The AWS may be outdated, however, as questions do not necessarily reflect the content of current issues for women (pay equity, sharing of household duties, etc.), and inclusion of these factors could conceivably paint a different picture of current attitudes toward women.

Along with a shift in the perception of women's roles, overt discrimination and sexism toward women have decreased in recent years, and cultural norms have changed the way that discrimination and its resulting prejudice are expressed (Campbell, Schellenberg, & Senn, 1997). Prejudice in its old form is described as being conveyed through stereotypes and discrimination. In its contemporary form, prejudice is described as subtle and implicit. While maintaining stereotypes, this contemporary form of sexism



denies the continued existence of discrimination, while treating women and men differently and focusing on women as incompetent (Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995). Compared to modern racism, modern sexism is described as including a lack of support for women's issues given the declaration that discrimination no longer exists. Concomitantly, there is a perception of equality in the work place, and inequalities are perceived as individualistic as opposed to a continued and generalized discrimination against women.

Another subtle form of discrimination and prejudice is described by Glick and Fiske (2001) as benevolent sexism. While valuing feminine traits, benevolent sexism uses this valuation to maintain a subordinate position of women in society. It is manifested by recognizing in a positive fashion that women are adored, deserving of protection, and needed by men. These assumptions, however, characterize women as weak and imply that they should conform to traditional gender roles. In addition to undermining women, benevolent sexism reinforces and justifies man's dominant self-concept and, in their minds, removes any sense of discrimination against women, since they believe they are supporting women and not devaluing them. Benevolent sexism provides a justification for the dominance of men over women. Glick and Fiske (1996) developed the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory to measure the presence of benevolent as well as hostile sexism, described as blatant, negative prejudice toward women. Glick and Fiske (1996) have surveyed more than 15,000 subjects in 19 nations and found that hostile and benevolent sexism are present across cultures and are predictable measures of gender inequality.

According to Biernat and Kobrynowicz (1997), stereotypes trigger judgment

standards, and their shifting standards model states that standards shift for stereotyped groups. The shifting standards model makes a distinction between objective and subjective judgments forcing both “leniency and stringency toward members of stereotyped groups” (Biernat, Ma, & Nario-Redmond, 2008, p. 292). With regard to objective assessments, the same measures, evaluation, and judgment are applied to everyone, and stereotypes are evident. In one study (Biernat, Manis, & Nelson, 1991), the earnings of men and women were evaluated. It was determined on this objective scale that men earned more money than women, and a stereotype was evident. Subjective measures, however, revealed no evidence of a stereotype: Despite real earnings, women were judged to be more financially successful than men. This shift in standards is explained in such a way that a man has to earn a lot of money to be considered financially successful while a woman does not have to earn as much as a man does to be considered financially successful. Because the standards shift and are lowered for women, the stereotype seemingly disappears, but this is so only because the standard has been lowered. The evaluator is seeing through a stereotyped lens and has lowered the standard because of it (Biernat & Manis, 1994). Bosak, Sczesny, and Eagly (2008), too, found evidence of a shifting standard for subjective measures, when the stereotypes of communion and agency associated with social roles disappeared.

The literature review thus far has established that stereotypes exist, are prevalent, and are perpetuated and confirmed through socialization. Stereotyping is a form of prejudice which may result in discrimination, and, unfortunately, has been proven to be an automatic response. Gender stereotypes have evolved as a result of the specific roles that women and men play in society, and despite women’s changing roles, traditional

beliefs about their strengths and weaknesses still abound. Given cultural changes, overt discrimination and prejudice are no longer tolerated, but evidence still exists that women are stereotyped and disadvantaged as a result. With stereotypes as a foundation, next we will explore the position of women in the workplace.

### **Women and Work**

A review of the literature on women in the workplace reveals that women are stereotyped and discriminated against, experience fewer opportunities for advancement along with lower pay and status, and that the organization itself contributes to these conditions. Gender stereotypes are prevalent in the work force (Eagly & Steffen, 1986), and masculine characteristics continue to be the preferred attributes of managers despite the increased presence of women (Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002). According to Rublerena Cohen and Ruble (1984), barriers for women range from discrimination to subtle forms of bias, and sex stereotypes contribute to women's disadvantaged career positions and options. Additionally, occupational stereotypes color perceptions of who is best qualified to fill certain types of roles. Women have difficulty gaining access to male-dominated positions, and, once in those positions, face greater obstacles and have to work harder than men in equivalent positions (Heilman, 2001). They are paid less, do not have access to relevant networks, work longer hours, and face greater criticism in performance evaluations and evaluations of potential (Phillips & Imhoff, 1997). The combination of gender and occupational stereotypes truly restricts women's potential and access for leadership roles.

A study by Davison and Burke (2000) concluded that stereotyping impacts the hiring process such that occupational stereotypes resulted in discrimination against both

women and men and that, in particular, women were discriminated against when no individuating information about them was available. Men were preferred for masculine-type jobs, and women were preferred for feminine type jobs. Men were also preferred for gender-neutral positions although not to the extent that was evident in gender-stereotypic roles. Sex stereotypes about the job as well as the sex of the interviewer effected hiring decisions. Foshi, Lai, and Sigerson's (1994) study of female and male applicants for engineering positions determined that men were selected more often, and only male subjects imposed double standards of evaluation toward females. This finding was confirmed in a later study (Foschi, 1996) which concluded that double standards of assessment of performance were employed by subjects such that women and men were held to different standards despite the fact that they performed at the same level. This practice of imposing a double standard, or "using different requirements to interpret the same evidence," (Foschi, 2000, p. 22) can be elicited with regard to levels of competence when gender differences are present.

### **Gender Roles, Stereotyping, and Discrimination**

Women are discriminated against in the workplace more than men, and gender stereotypes contribute to this disadvantage faced by women (Gutek, Cohen, & Tsui, 1996). These stereotypes stem not only from the traditionally held beliefs about agentic and communal traits (Bakan, 1966) believed to be possessed by women and men but also from occupational stereotypes about traits necessary for success in any particular role (Eagly, 1987). Occupational stereotyping occurs when a job becomes sex-typed, or associated primarily with one gender, and it contributes to gender segregation in the work place (Rublerenae Cohen & Ruble, 1984). These stereotypes comprise not only whether

work is appropriate for women or for men but also parlay assumptions about personal characteristics, compensation, and status.

Eagly's (1987) social role theory states that stereotypes stem from the social roles that women and men have traditionally held over time. Women are perceived as communal and men as agentic due to the division of labor that has existed which separates the genders into these kinds of roles, and these differences are perceived as desirable. Masculine traits are more highly valued in jobs than are feminine traits, and the prestige of jobs was determined to be highly correlated with the presence of masculine traits associated with the job (Glick, 1991). While feminine traits were valued, this was more likely to occur in jobs of lower prestige. Higher levels of agency were correlated with greater career success, and while this was true for both men and women, women rated themselves lower in agency and higher in communion than men (Abele, 2003).

The stereotypes associated with women are not those that are considered essential for success in the work place (Heilman, 1995). This lack of fit is evident in hiring decisions, performance evaluations, and even in the self-evaluations of women. Because recognizing someone's gender is immediate and prominent, the elicitation of gender stereotypes can be as present. This is especially the case when gender is salient in a particular setting, that is, when an individual's gender is different from the majority in that setting (Kanter, 1977). These kinds of scenarios which draw attention to gender differences are apt to trigger the elicitation of stereotypes (Gardner, Van Eck Peluchette, & Clinebell, 1994).

**Gender and occupational stereotyping.** What we know when we think of occupations is about the people in the jobs more so than the actual work the job entails

(Glick, 1995). People view occupations similarly regardless of their gender, education level, ethnicity, or social class, and the view of occupations is highly stereotyped. When occupations are highly sex-segregated, gender becomes salient, and stereotypes become activated (Oswald, 2008). According to Oswald (2008), people make assumptions about personality characteristics of individuals based on their association with particular groups, and assumptions are also made about traits that are suitable for particular roles. When a job candidate's stereotyped characteristics match those of the role, that individual is more likely to be hired than someone who does not possess the traits identified as important to fill certain roles. Those not meeting the stereotyped expectations will be at a disadvantage. If a woman, for example, does not meet the traditionally defined stereotype, she will likely be categorized into a subtype such as "masculine female," (Glick, Zion, & Nelson, 1988, p. 179), and other assumptions are then made about her skills and abilities. Additionally, individuating information about a woman but not related to occupational stereotypes can further reinforce gender stereotypes when evaluating the female applicant. As an example, a woman who identifies herself on her resume as participating in a traditionally female activity can create a stronger impression of herself in a stereotypical role.

As stated previously, descriptive stereotypes describe how people are; Prescriptive stereotypes describe how people should be. It is the prescriptive stereotype, or the should-be, that leads to a determination of lack of fit for positions in gender-typed occupational roles (Heilman, 2001). Heilman (2001) continues by describing that the lack of fit between the perceived agentic characteristics needed to be a leader, for example, and the communal traits ascribed to women result in expectations of failure if a

woman is chosen for a job. In addition, the extent to which stereotyping takes place along with the degree to which masculine characteristics are perceived as required for success combine consequentially to the detriment of women. Even if a woman is successful and has proven herself, the result is still one of lack of fit, for her performance is inconsistent with the prescribed stereotype for her gender. When a counter-normal condition is present, the perceiver is likely to disapprove (as cited in Heilman, 2001, p. 661). So, even when a woman is successful, there will still be some level of disapproval.

Characteristics that are thought to be needed for success in gender-stereotyped roles or occupations reflect gender stereotypes (Cejka & Eagly, 1999). Biernat and Kobrynowicz's (1997) study of job applicants revealed that female applicants for female-stereotyped jobs were evaluated more positively, and male applicants for male-stereotyped jobs were rated more positively. In a study of gender-role stereotypes by Cejka and Eagly (1999), three categories of attributes were examined for evidence of stereotypes: personality traits, physical attributes, and cognition. The study confirmed that masculine characteristics were perceived as needed for success in male-dominated roles, while success for female-dominated roles required feminine attributes. For personality traits, feminine qualities matching the female stereotype of nurturing, kind, and helpful to others were considered essential for success in female roles, and masculine traits such as aggression, competitiveness, and dominance were considered essential for success in male roles. While not considered as important for success, physical characteristics along gender lines were also articulated as needed and were segregated by gender role. Cognitive attributes, however, were not stereotyped. This study suggests that gender role stereotypes promote and sustain the division of labor "by producing

gendered expectations about the occupations appropriate for each sex and influencing women's and men's tendencies to aspire to particular occupations" (Cejka & Eagly, 1999, p. 421). According to Cejka and Eagly (1999), these stereotypes lead perceivers to expect a degree of fit between gender and occupational roles which helps to sustain gender stereotypes and to restrict women to stereotypical roles.

Behaving in discordance with gendered expectations can also affect a woman's perceived competency and likeability (Rudman & Glick, 2001). While it has become increasingly acceptable for a woman to assert herself, traditional gender roles limit her level of assertiveness such that women are expected not to display competitiveness or social dominance. Backlash may result for women who exhibit certain agentic qualities, such as dominance, in that the communal prescriptive stereotype is not present, and these women are viewed as socially deficient. In an experiment conducted by Rudman and Glick (2001), agentic female applicants were rated with fewer social skills and less likeable than male applicants presented in an identical fashion. The agentic female was also considered to be less hireable than the male when the job required social skills. This latter finding confirms discrimination based on prescriptive gender stereotypes since it is expected that women will be nice. Interestingly, the female applicant who displayed competence (but not dominance) and likeability was not discriminated against. The authors suggest that the agentic trait of dominance in the forms of aggression or competitiveness, as opposed to independence and ambition, are those responsible for the backlash.

**Gender discrimination.** Sex role stereotyping contributes to discrimination in the workplace (Glick, et al., 1988). Heilman (2001) posits that the stereotyping of women



results in three outcomes: (a) her performance will be devalued, (b) she will not be given due credit for her successes, and (c) she will suffer consequences for having succeeded.

Women's work is devalued when compared to men, and the behavior of women is interpreted negatively while the same behavior is interpreted positively when enacted by men (as cited in Heilman, 2001, p. 662). Because of the expectation that a woman will fail, her success is more often attributed to luck or circumstance than to skill or intelligence. Reasons apart from the individual, such as team or group contributions, or events outside her control, are often cited as the reason for her success.

Differences in the workplace in the treatment of women and men and the standards to which they are held can result from gender stereotypes. Stereotypes activate judgment standards, and the shifting standards model says that standards shift for stereotyped groups (Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997). Using competence as an example, a man is considered to be more competent than a woman, but competence in women is judged at a lower standard than for men. At the same time, standards for identifying a lack of competence are lower for men than for women. The shifting standards model (Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997) makes a distinction between subjective and objective judgments. Social stereotypes lead individuals to adjust subjective assessments based on the expected behaviors or outcomes of the stereotyped group being judged. With regard to objective assessments, the same evaluation or judgment would hold true for all members of the group; Meaning does not subjectively shift within the group. The Biernat and Kobrynowicz (1997) study simulated the review of job applicants and the selection of candidates for interviews. Variables included a gender comparison of males versus females as well as job role—a stereotypical female role versus a stereotypical male role.

When ability to perform the job was evaluated, more examples of skills were required of women to prove they could do the job. In addition, minimum standards for women were significantly lower than those for men. Furthermore, minimum standards were significantly lower than ability standards for women, but these standards did not differ for males. Another byproduct of setting a lower standard for a devalued minority group is that a strong performance by a member of this group may be evaluated more favorably than the same performance by a member of a valued group. While this may appear to favor the devalued group, it serves as no justice, as the standard is lower. This kind of subjective evaluation can easily result in the "she's very good...for a woman" kind of appraisal.

In addition to the kinds of double standards described above, women can also become subject to the effects of sex-role spillover (Gutek & Cohen, 1987). Sex-role spillover entails enacting gender-based roles as opposed to occupational roles in the work place, and it is predominate in settings where one sex comprises the majority. Sex-role spillover occurs when the gender role merges with the job role, and individuals are treated or viewed based on their gender as opposed to their work role. This difference calls attention to the minority, and when it is a woman, a man will view her as a woman first and as a co-worker second. She is perceived as different and is treated primarily based on her gender role. Likewise, a diminished work presence can occur when a woman's appearance becomes a focus. When this happens, perceptions of her warmth, morality, and competence are reduced, and these same things do not happen to men (Heflick, Goldenberg, Cooper, & Puvia, 2011).

Sex-role spillover has been linked to sexual harassment (Borgida & Burgess,

1997), and this form of stereotyping has led to lawsuits and claims of sexual harassment by female workers (Barrett & Lees, 1994). The predominance of the gender role as opposed to the occupational role in the workplace, and the salience of a female's gender may result in a hostile work environment (Deaux, 1995). As such, the work environment can elicit cues of a sexual nature and result in the perception of women as sexual objects calling attention to their physical characteristics while ignoring their professional qualities. Burgess and Borgida (1999) posit that prescriptive stereotypes

...result in discrimination through disparate treatment when women are devalued or subjected to a hostile workplace because they violate prescriptions about how women should behave. [This] discrimination is motivated by hostility and gender prejudice, [and] stereotypes serve to maintain [these] power inequities. (p. 2)

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination, and in fiscal year 2011, nearly eighty-four percent of the sexual harassment complaints filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) were filed by women (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.). According to the EEOC, it is unlawful to treat any individual unfavorably based on their sex, and the law forbids differential treatment in the workplace with regard to any aspect of employment, including hiring, firing, pay, work assignments, promotions, layoffs, training, fringe benefits, or any other terms of employment. Furthermore, it is unlawful to harass any individual based on their sex, and harassment may or may not be of a sexual nature. Such harassment is considered to be illegal when the frequency or severity of the harassment creates a hostile work environment or when such harassment results in the differential treatment of women or men.

According to Franke (1997), sexual harassment is wrong not only because it is unlawful but also because it minimizes women, keeping them subordinate to men by reinforcing and perpetuating gender stereotypes. While the friendly behavior of women may be misinterpreted as sexual interest by some men, this misperception is associated with males' beliefs in traditional gender roles, their tolerance for sexual harassment, and their denial of females' views of sexual misconduct (Stockdale, 1993). A study conducted by Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, and Magley (1997) established a high correlation between sexual harassment and a male-dominated work environment teemed with traditional male responsibilities.

The discrimination of women in the workplace also has negative personal and professional consequences for women. Women experienced greater work conflict and feelings of diminished power and status while devoting more hours to work (Gutek, et al., 1996). The motivation to correct outcomes of discrimination also varied between men and women (Iyer & Ryan, 2009). In a study conducted by Iyer and Ryan (2009), women were motivated to action when they perceived the scenario to be unfair or illegitimate and displayed anger toward the situation. Men, however, were motivated to act toward change only when they considered the situation to be pervasive, and the underlying emotion was one of sympathy and not anger. For low identifying men and women, sympathy was the only motivator to act for change.

### **Differences in Opportunity and Career Advancement for Women**

Women experience discrimination upon entry to the workplace, and once there, receive lower pay, and have fewer opportunities for advancement than men (Phillips & Imhoff, 1997). Those making hiring decisions have been found to view candidates in

stereotypical ways, and a predominantly masculine culture reinforced decisions to maintain gender-stereotyped roles and to sustain the male preference for male-dominated roles (Gorman, 2005). Women historically have been paid less than men, and while the percentage of women's earnings to men's had increased from 62.3% in 1979, women still make less money than men having reached 80.4% of men's earnings in 2004 (U.S. Department of Labor, May 2005). Current structures for promotion that assume a linear career progression prohibit the advancement of women (Evetts, 2000), and lack of access to things such as informal networks further inhibits their firm establishment within the power structure of organizations (Farr, 1988).

**Entry into the workplace.** Even with the present voluminous population of women in the workforce, their talents are underutilized, and occupational and career barriers continue to exist that limit their options and their mobility (Phillips & Imhoff, 1997). According to Phillips and Imhoff (1997), gender role stereotypes and the desire to maintain traditional roles in the workplace can restrict access for women. Their research comprised an analysis of ten years of empirical studies related to the vocations of women, and their conclusion was that the professional and career experiences of women differ greatly from those of men. Differences in salary, status, promotion, and performance evaluations were present as well as barriers to opportunities and advancement.

Additionally, the portrayal of women in the media and in publications continues, for the most part, to show them in stereotypical roles and ways, and concepts of traditional work and family roles remain relatively persistent (Phillips & Imhoff, 1997). Suggestions have also been put forth that given the negative effects of stereotyping, some women may opt for more traditional careers, and Oswald's (2008) study explored the

effects of stereotyping on the career aspirations of women. Findings indicated that when stereotypes were activated, women were more inclined to select stereotypical, gender-typed career goals and were confident in their ability to be successful in those roles. Oswald (2008) suggests that woman fearing or facing discrimination in a male-dominated environment may elect to pursue a more traditional career path.

Along somewhat similar lines is Gadassi and Gati's (2009) study of gender stereotypes relative to occupational preferences. In this study, men's and women's explicit interests were respectively more masculine and more feminine. However, when comparing the explicit and implicit preferences of women, a significant difference was found, while this was not the case for men. Women's implicit interests showed significantly less evidence of stereotyping than their directly articulated preferences. With a conclusion that women desire nontraditional kinds of responsibilities but explicitly associate themselves with more gender-appropriate roles conveys a strong message about the power of stereotyping and social acceptance and may be an example of Gardner's et al.'s (1994) suggestion that women engage in "strategies of gender management" (p. 149) to balance their desire to display appropriate levels of masculinity and femininity.

Several studies have confirmed the presence of a preference for masculine characteristics to fill traditionally male jobs as well as links between gender role and occupational role. Glick's (1991) study confirmed the presence of discrimination in that applicants were tied to positions based on gender apart from character traits. Furthermore, the gender selection of candidates for jobs was directly proportional to the gender of incumbents in those positions. When testing for sex-neutral jobs, the perceived gender

traits associated with the position, and not the individual's gender, resulted in gender discrimination. In other words, women were discriminated against for jobs perceived as requiring masculine traits, and men were discriminated against for jobs perceived as requiring feminine traits.

Glick conducted a similar study in 1988 related to the evaluation of job candidates. Individuating information not related to the job but aimed at contradicting gender stereotypes was provided for both male and female applicants. The individuating information eliminated the presence of gender stereotypes based on personality, however, it did not erase job-related stereotypes, and discrimination was still present in the selection of candidates for interviews in stereotyped kinds of positions. Decisions about who to interview were impacted by assumptions around personality traits. Women were at a disadvantage not because they possessed feminine characteristics but because they did not possess masculine characteristics. The author suggests that not only are women selected for certain roles based on assumed personality traits, but also they are selected for jobs based on assumptions about the appropriateness of gender as related to any particular role.

Biernat and Fuegen's (2001) study revealed a double standard in the evaluation of women and men as job candidates. The study revealed that, when evaluating applicants for hire, minimum standards for required skills were lowered for women as compared to men, while minimum standards as proof of ability were raised for women as compared to men. This study found that standards were set higher for the masculine-stereotyped job and for the decision to hire as opposed to appoint to a short list. In addition, findings indicated that it was easier for women to make the short-list of applicants, which Biernat

and Fuegen (2001) attribute to lower standards being applied to female candidates.

The gender of the hiring manager was also found to influence the selection of candidates for both women and men (Gorman, 2005). In Gorman's (2005) study, women favored women, and men favored men, and when gender roles of the positions were masculine, the men fared better, and when they were feminine, the women did better. At higher levels within the organization, when women were underrepresented, males supported the hiring of females. But when an equal distribution of men and women was present, males preferred the hiring of other males.

**Women's lives in the workplace.** Historically, men have always earned more money than women. The wage gap between men and women did not begin to shrink until the 1980s, and this is attributed to the increase in education, experience, and skills of females (Bernhardt, Morris, & Handcock, 1995). It may be not so much that women gained but more that men have lost their footing due to the decline in industrial and manufacturing jobs and a transitioning to service-related jobs. While White women have always earned less than White men, the disparity is even greater for African-American women. Regardless, women's earnings' increases were much smaller than men's, and a slowing of this convergence is expected. While the ratio of women's to men's earnings has increased, and White women at higher salary levels are realizing incomes that are gaining momentum on their male counterparts, lower paid White women's salaries stagnated in the 1990s (Cotter, Hermsen, & Vanneman, 1999). Regardless, White men continue to earn more than women and minority men, and women continue to suffer a "gender disadvantage" when it comes to earnings (Cotter, et al., 1999, p. 446). Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman (1999) state that the effect of children on earnings, while



positive for men, is negative for women and particularly so at the lower income levels. Men earn more than women even after controlling for factors including race, experience, hours work, marital status, and education.

Qualifications in terms of experience are a prerequisite for promotion, and women's careers often lack the linear progression that is rewarded in organizations (Evetts, 2000). Part-time work is not valued, and the combination of these two conditions sustains the dominant position of men at higher levels of management. According to Evetts (2000), cultural systems within organizations color expectations and behavior and set the tone for what is expected, and these elements are influenced by the dominance of men. Even if a woman decides to pursue promotion, her actions go against what is considered normal within the organization, and her associated behavior is expected to change in order to be consistent with the maleness of the environment. Defying gender stereotypes, she is then perceived as deviant or deficient and is subject to criticism not only from the men but also the women.

Mentoring has been recommended as a way for women to develop the necessary skills to advance, but Catalyst's survey results of 4,000 MBA alums concluded that, despite the mentoring efforts, women still lag behind men with regard to both salaries and promotions (Carter & Silva, 2010a). The survey showed that those who had a mentor were placed in starting positions at higher levels than those who did not have mentors, but the men who were mentored still fared better than the women who were mentored. After years of work experience, the men still earned more money than the women.

Women, particularly in higher levels of management, are prone to receive poorer performance evaluations than males, and the likelihood of this happening is greater as the

presence of females decreases (Heilman, 1995). When job relevant information is available and explicit, and when a woman's performance is directly observable, stereotypes are not likely to be present. However, stereotyping is likely to occur when little or no information is available or if available information is ambiguous. These kinds of results were also observed by Foddy and Smithson (1999), whose experiment was intended to further explore the concept of a double standard between men and women. When the standards for ability were made explicit, expectations for performance were clear and unambiguous, and no room for subjective interpretation was present, the performance expectations and outcome ratings for men and women were the same—even when the task was described as a 'male' task. However, because women are not supposed to behave like men, when they are successful, they can be penalized for their success (Heilman, 2001). Research has shown that as women work their way up the career ladder, they are less likely to be promoted than men (as cited in Heilman, 2001, p. 667). Women are also viewed differently if successful such that they may be described as a bitch, while a man is described as competent (see also Basow, 1986, p. 237).

Generally, because stereotypical behavior is expected, when a women behaves outside of the norm, negative evaluations may result. Maurer and Taylor's (1994) research has tied negative evaluations to the perception of masculine and feminine traits in individuals. While the sex of the subjects had no effect, perceptions of their masculine and feminine characteristics did relative to the requirements of their jobs. When it was perceived that masculine traits were required, the evaluations were more positive. The emphasis placed on masculinity that was associated with the job affected the outcome of performance evaluations.

Finally, Davies, Spencer, Quinn, and Gerhardstein (2002) argue that the impact of stereotype threat can work to the detriment of women. Stereotype threat is the threat of being stereotyped in a particular domain where a negative stereotype exists (Steele, 1997). Because women are stereotyped negatively, they are susceptible to stereotype threat, particularly in a male-dominated environment. Individuals in negatively stereotyped groups are acutely aware of the stereotypes associated with their membership in the group. With this knowledge, when they are in a setting in which a negatively stereotyped trait becomes salient, they are cognizant of the fact that they may be stereotyped with regard to this trait. While having no doubts about their ability, the fear of being stereotyped can interfere with their ability to perform well thereby undermining their performance. In the Davies et al. (2002) study, exposure to stereotypes caused women to express less interest in educational and vocational options in which they ran the risk of being stereotyped.

Women in the workplace face stereotyping and discrimination as well as obstacles to their attainment and advancement with regard to employment. While the numbers of women in the work force is increasing, and the pay gap between the genders is getting smaller, women continue to face difficulties as they seek equality with men. Unfortunately, a recent study by Fetterolf and Eagly (2011) demonstrates that today's young women do not expect things to change. When looking into their futures, female respondents expected continued inequality in their lives with regard to reduced work time, lower incomes than their husbands, and more housework and childcare responsibilities than their spouses. The challenge, according to the study's authors, is to reignite the spark of hope in the belief that things can change.

### **The Organization as an Obstacle**

Although it seems that the kinds of things which are described above should not happen, they, in fact, do. To create a context in which these occurrences develop and unfold, one must look at the organization. As described by Bielby (2000), "systematic" sources of discrimination and bias are built into organizational policies and practices. Because they have become embedded in the fiber of the organization, they often are overlooked. Bielby (2000) suggests that areas to explore within organizations include its structure, internal politics, policy and practice for hiring, job assignment, training, pay, and promotion. Like others (Agars, 2004; Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997), she conveys that when hiring decisions are highly subjective, it is likely that stereotypes will influence the decision makers. In addition, in these subjective environments, outside influences such as informal networks play a strong role in determining who is selected for particular jobs. Making certain kinds of experience required for certain jobs can disadvantage individuals who, because of their gender, may have had limited opportunity to gain such experience. With these as examples, once policies and practices that discriminate have become entrenched within an institution, it is rare that they change without some significant change in the organization's culture or environment (as cited in Bielby, 2000, p. 124) and are difficult to change due to the resistance of those who benefit from them.

According to Buzzanell (1994), gender is contained in and communicated through structures and practices in the work place, and expectations of adhering to gender roles are conveyed. Historically, organizations have been male-centered, and their structures and operations have been developed and designed from this single masculine vantage point. The traditions that have developed and been maintained over time and which

routinely marginalize women are so strong and prevalent that they are taken for granted. Buzzanell (2004) describes an "ethic of competitive individualism" (p. 344) in the workplace that disadvantages women. In this setting, a spirit of competition results in winner and losers, and women can be left in the periphery, segregated into lesser roles and expected to engage in stereotypic behaviors. Buzzanell (2004) points out that these things are not necessarily intentionally put into place, but the atmosphere in general can be one that is taken for granted and sustained. Men are privileged in this space, and women are excluded and not permitted in their circle. This has impacts for opportunities for advancement as well as personal consequences for women who just can't seem to get ahead.

Bobbitt-Zeher's (2011) research looked at narratives of women and found that in the work place, women were viewed as women first and as workers second. Women were viewed in negatively stereotypical ways as emotional, hormonal, and unintelligent, and stereotyping also occurred when women occupied nontraditional roles. Women were treated along the lines of prescriptive stereotypes and were penalized for their appearance, language, and behavior when it was inconsistent with the stereotype. It was also found that policies were enforced inconsistently, and women were held to higher standards than men. Davey's (2008) research into organizational politics revealed that it is masculine-centered, and success in organizations was described as rooted in both masculinity and in politics. In this study, women described the political scene as an arena for scoring points and back-stabbing, while they paid the price for their lack of participation when it came to appraisals and promotions. Achieving success in the organization was described as having to engage in politics and to behave like men, the

likes of which are incompatible with femininity. Men perceived the politics as a means for establishing control, while the women found it threatening and undermining.

Although the women claimed not to be discriminated against, they described organizational politics as male-dominated and as an institutional barrier for them. These politics were described as irrational, competitive, aggressive, and self-serving. If women chose to engage in the politics, they were viewed negatively, as they had stepped outside of their gender role. If they chose not to participate in the politics, they risked the cost of not being a part of the action, which was great source of power within the organization. Davey (2008) concludes by saying that organizational politics sustains gender differences within organizations, since it is male-dominated and provides a central source of power and control for males.

According to Heilman (1995), gender stereotypes carry over into the workplace. Despite the fact that women and men are more alike than they are different in the work setting (as cited in Heilman, 1995, p. 5), stereotypes persist, and these stereotypes segregate workers based on gender. Bias against women has been credited for the underrepresentation of women in upper levels of management and senior roles. This particular obstacle has been labeled the “glass ceiling,” and a root cause has been identified as stereotyping (as cited in Heilman, 1995, p. 4). Stereotyping impacts the ways in which individuals perceive and interpret the skills, behaviors, and abilities of stereotyped group members as well as memory recall and inferences made about individuals. Behavior that is consistent with the stereotype reinforces it, while behavior that is inconsistent is attributed to some other cause or is ignored. Fundamentally, women and men are perceived as very different from one another, and the stereotypes of these

two groups take on a bipolar flavor. Stereotypes carry over into the work place and color the perceptions of what women and men do despite the fact both women and men have demonstrated equal leadership behaviors, career motivation and commitment, attitudes, and desire for achievement and power (as cited in Heilman, 1995, p. 5).

Heilman (1995) continues by describing that when gender is highlighted as a distinguishing characteristic within a setting, the use of stereotypes becomes prevalent. Programs designed to assist women in the workplace, such as mentoring and network groups, affirmative action, flexible work hours, and training, may indeed hinder women in that they highlight and emphasize differences between men and women in the work place and may serve to perpetuate stereotypes about women. Gardner et al. (1994) suggest that because women often have less power than men, female managers more often may be inclined to ingratiate themselves to men. So long as this happens, the stereotype of women as dependent will persist. The authors add that women are less likely to promote themselves than men are and that male managers preferred self-promotion tactics over person-related behaviors exhibited by women. Men will revert to coercive tactics more quickly than women. Along similar lines, men who self-promote and express confidence are viewed more favorably than women who display these behaviors (as cited in Rudman, 1998), and women who do more often suffer rejection and dislike from peers. Again, women face a double bind and a double standard with regard to limitations around expected and appropriate behavior. In Rudman's (1998) experiment, women who self-promoted had increased aptitude ratings but were also disliked and suffered in hire rates. So while it was suggested that women utilize impression management as a means of counteracting stereotypes, if they do so, it will be at a price.

Additionally, having to choose when or when not to behave in certain ways based on the perceived expectations of others can create doubt and also reinforce the female gender stereotype.

Organizations are not gender neutral (Acker, 1990). A gendered organization is one in which men and women are segregated in terms of opportunity, power and control, participation and identity. Acker (1990) declares that gender segregation exists in the work place and is created and maintained through organizational practices. Along with the gender segregation come inequities in income and status. Additionally, the work place portrays and sustains cultural images of gender and impacts the gender identity of its workers. An interesting comment from Acker (1990) conveys that sexual harassment is not seen as an organizational problem—it's viewed as a personal problem and an anomaly of a particular set of individuals. Organizations exclude the viewpoints of women, and this, too, is an organizational problem and not a problem between men and women. Acker's (1990) conclusion is that within male-dominated organizations, patriarchy and bureaucracy go hand-in-hand and serve to lessen the experiences and opportunities for women

As outlined, factors within the organization that can enforce gender stereotypes include the division of labor within an organization, promotion and career paths, requirements for certain positions, organizational hierarchies, and cultural beliefs and attitudes. With these kinds of obstacles present for women seeking to enter the workplace as well as those already engaged, discrimination and stereotyping that occur within the organization continue to minimize and devalue the presence and contributions of women. The disadvantaged position of women is clear and is worsened as women seek



advancement into higher levels of management. Next, we shall explore the position of women seeking and holding leadership roles within organizations.

### **Women and Leadership**

In 2010, the U.S. population was 50.8% female and 49.2% male, and women were present in the labor force at a rate of 46.7%, while men were at 53.3% (Catalyst, 2012a, May). Focusing on positions of leadership paints quite a different picture. In Fortune 500 companies, women make up 3.4% of CEOs, 14.1% of executive officers, and hold 16.1% of board seats (Catalyst, 2012b, April). In 2011, women comprised 45.4% of associates in law firms but only 19.5% of partners (Catalyst, 2012d, April), and women held 21.6% of all science and engineering management positions (Catalyst, 2011, April). Currently, women hold 8 federal executive-level positions within the President's Cabinet, and one-third of the Supreme Court is female. Women make up 18.3% of Congress, 20% of the Senate, and 17.9% of the House of Representatives. Five women are governors, 23.4% of our states' executive positions are held by women, and 17.4% of our cities with populations over 30,000 are led by women (Center for American Women and Politics, 2013).

In 2006, women were presidents at 23% of the nation's colleges and universities (Touchton, Musil, & Campbell, 2008). As reported by King and Gomez (2008), 45% of senior administrators in higher education were female, but when this figure is analyzed more closely, only 38% were chief academic officers and 36% were academic deans. Furthermore, when broken down by institution type, women are less frequently present and less likely to hold positions that are pathways to the presidency.

Striking differences are apparent when considering the ratio of women in the

labor force to women in leadership roles. To consider this discrepancy regarding the presence of women among our leaders, we will explore the current circumstances and conditions under which women work, looking in particular at leadership stereotypes and related barriers, leadership style, and leadership effectiveness.

### **Leadership Stereotypes**

According to Agars (2004), there is a lack of research that explores the ways in which stereotyping impacts women in the work place and the ways in which it limits and restricts their mobility toward senior level roles. Small effect sizes and inconsistent conclusions in current research (see J. Swim, Borgida, Maruyama, & Myers, 1989) have led to the conclusion that this problem does not exist. These results have led researchers to search for reasons other than stereotypes when exploring the underrepresentation of women in management and leadership roles. Because stereotypes are triggered automatically and work to the detriment of women, attention to their impacts is important. Agars (2004) argues that looking singly at effect size with regard to gender bias gives the impression that stereotyping has little effect and that no problem exists but that this problem, and associated effect sizes, should be viewed cumulatively. One cannot look at a single hiring decision but must view the cumulative effect of these hiring decisions on women.

In Swim's (1989) analysis, gender bias accounted for 1% of the variance between men and women hires. Agars (2004) likens this to hiring 52 men and 48 women but goes through an iterative process to describe the cumulative effect of this 1% over a series of hiring decisions. As each pool of men and women works their way through the hiring process, reducing the number of women by 1% (the effect size of impact of gender on

hiring), at the final stage, the percentage of women who have persisted is cumulatively greater if looking only at one single event. Agars (2004) suggests that at higher levels of management, the impact of stereotypes becomes greater because greater numbers of men are likely making the decision and, as a subjective one, it is likely to invoke stereotypes.

Working hand-in-hand with leadership stereotypes is the issue of status relative to gender. According to Carli (2001), women have less status and less power than men do, and women are generally perceived as having less expertise and knowledge than men unless the area of expertise is female-centered. In an experiment conducted by Propp (1995), it was determined that males were more successful at exerting influence than females were, and women were more likely to be ignored than men. Additionally, having information relevant to a group's task improved males' influence over the group, but the same was not true for women. However, these differences depend on the context of the situation and the behavior displayed by the influencer. Similarly, Taps and Martin (1990) found that women in a mixed-gender group who attribute their performance to their own knowledge, skills, or expertise as opposed to giving credit to others had little influence on coworkers and were not well liked. Just the opposite was true, however, when gender group was comprised of all females.

**Agentic versus communal.** According to Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001), because men have held leadership positions for so long, they have set the norm for what defines a leader. Women, then, are compared to men in order to gauge their ability. Male is the standard to which women must subscribe. Similarly, masculine qualities are those seen as manifested by a leader and feminine qualities the follower. It then follows that the male gender role and leadership are consistent, while the female gender role and

leadership are incongruous (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) state that leaders occupy roles within their organizations but are also subject to being ascribed with the traits of their gender. The extent to which this becomes problematic for women depends on the context of the leader role, the activation of the female gender role, and the strength of the belief systems of the followers with regard to traditional gender roles. The combination of leader role and gender can portray two different images for both women and men.

Several studies have confirmed the leader/agentive/male stereotype. In research conducted by Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, and Reichard (2008), strong leaders were preferred over sensitive leaders, and strength was considered more important for effective leadership than sensitivity. As a result, male leaders were considered to be more effective than female leaders. The strong male leader was liked best and the sensitive male leader the least. This can be viewed as consistent with role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) in that the strong leader behaves consistently with the leader stereotype which does not include being sensitive. The sensitive male leader, however, violates the stereotype on both counts and is therefore liked the least. The sensitive female leader violates the leader stereotype because of her sex, so before she has done anything, she's at a disadvantage. The strong female leader was considered the least effective of the group of four. Both her gender and her strength violate the leader stereotype, and she ends up in last place. When testing for positive relationships between leadership strength or leadership sensitivity relative to likeability and effectiveness, it was found that female leaders must be both strong and sensitive, while male leaders need only be strong. For women in particular, it was not the fact that they were strong that resulted in a negative

evaluation, it was that they weren't sensitive, while male leaders were evaluated negatively when they weren't strong. Overall, women are in a double-bind in that they must be both strong and sensitive, when men need only be strong to be considered an effective leader. The authors conclude that these kinds of leadership stereotypes and biases can result in discrimination against female leaders.

In a study conducted by Embry, Padgett, and Caldwell (2008), the gender of the leader was not disclosed. Instead, stereotypically masculine and feminine traits were exhibited by leaders as a test to determine if the genders of each would be assumed to be male and female respectively. This was, in fact, the case. When actors portrayed masculine leadership characteristics, the sex of the leader was presumed to be male, and likewise for the female stereotype. Furthermore, regardless of male or female leadership traits, the leader was still assumed to be a man, confirming the presence of the male/leader stereotype. A perceived male leader displaying feminine characteristics was considered to be more effective than a male leader exhibiting a gender-consistent style, while the same was not true for women. Female leaders were preferred when their leadership style was consistent with their gender. Again we see evidence of a double standard in that male leaders can step outside their gender role, but females cannot, while, at the same time, there is evidence that a feminine style is preferred over a masculine style. In this study, men did not differ in their preference of men or women perceived as masculine, but females rated the female exhibiting a masculine style higher than the masculine-style male. While the authors discuss the advantage of a less strict standard of adhering to gender roles, they also remind us that the preference for a strong female occurred when women were evaluating women and that men did not prefer a strong

female leader.

Catalyst's (2005) research on gender stereotypes also shows a male preference for leaders and for women in gender-appropriate roles. A survey of corporate leaders revealed that gender-based stereotyping persists in the workplace. Unfortunately, both women and men stereotyped each other, and senior managers reported differences in the leadership capabilities of women and men. These stereotypic beliefs were stronger when the occupational role was gender-biased and were also present for senior male managers who reported to women. Both women and men reported that women were most effective at traits ascribed to the female gender such as care-taking and that men were best at stereotypically male traits such as dominance. A conclusion from this study was the concern over the strong presence of stereotyping and that simply hiring more women would not solve this problem. Davison and Burke's (2000) meta-analysis of leadership studies revealed similar results in that men were preferred in masculine jobs and women in feminine jobs.

**Leadership stereotypes as barriers.** Although personality traits and characteristics have been blamed for the lack of women in leadership, many studies have determined that women and men are, in fact, similarly motivated and have comparable values and job-related skills and behavior (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). Differences in education levels and work experience between women and men have also been highlighted, but these differences have since all but disappeared. Some theorists point to discrimination supported by the dominance of men in upper levels of management, while others point to systemic barriers which are present in organizations. Oakley (2000) describes reasons for the paucity of women leaders, and these include gender-based

stereotypes and the old boys' network, as well as tokenism. Corporate structures and practices account for some of these differences as do organizational and cultural preferences and practices. According to Rudman and Glick (2001),

...women who strive for leadership positions are in a double bind: They can enact communal behaviors and be liked but not respected or enact agentic behaviors and be respected but not liked. In either case, they risk being disqualified for leadership roles. (p. 744)

Stereotypes restrict women's access to leadership positions. According to Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, and Ristikari (2011), this disadvantage is not due to a negative stereotype of women but to the lack of fit between the female stereotype and the leader stereotype. The descriptive stereotype of women leaders is contrary to the female gender role, and the prescriptive stereotype of female leaders leads to a negative evaluation of their performance. The authors conducted a meta-analysis of research based on three established paradigms of leadership and gender stereotypes. Schein's (1973) study of managers yielded that the stereotype of managers is male. The Powell and Butterfield (1979) study determined that the leadership stereotype contained agentic traits as opposed to communal traits which were contrary to the leadership stereotype, and the Shinar (1975) study revealed that the leadership stereotype was seen as masculine and not feminine.

To explore the current state of leadership stereotypes, Koenig et al. (2011) identified studies that mirrored each paradigm between the time of the original studies and 2009. The analysis of 40 studies reflecting the Schein (1973) "think-manager, think-male" paradigm revealed that men were viewed as managers whereas women were not.

Twenty-two studies in the agency-communal paradigm (Powell & Butterfield, 1979) confirmed the stereotype of leaders as agentic but not communal. Seven studies of leadership and masculinity versus femininity confirmed that leaders were viewed as masculine, consistent with Shinar's (1975) results. In summary, leaders are viewed as similar to men but not to women and as having agentic, masculine characteristics.

When evaluating leadership differences by participant sex in these studies, men viewed leaders as masculine and not feminine and were less likely to attribute leadership qualities to women. Additionally, the higher the status of the leadership position, the more likely the case that the stereotype was masculine. This conclusion supports role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) describing the mismatch between women and leaders which contributes to the lack of women in leadership roles. In summary, "men fit cultural construals of leadership better than women do and thus have better access to leader roles and face fewer challenges in becoming successful in them" (Koenig, et al., 2011, p. 637).

Catalyst (2004, June) surveyed 705 senior-level women and 243 senior-level men. Findings indicated that women continue to face the challenge of being stereotyped and faced challenges that men did not. While women and men achieved their success in similar ways and faced similar barriers, women faced more obstacles than men. Barriers perceived by both genders included behavior outside of the organizational norm as well as being out of touch with the politics of the organization. Obstacles unique to women included exclusion from informal networks, stereotyping, a lack of role models and mentors, the lack of opportunity for visibility, and an unfriendly corporate culture. Men were reported as being more optimistic about women's opportunities than the women



were, and men also did not recognize the unique obstacles faced by women. In addition, both sexes reported that men have difficulty being managed by women.

In a qualitative study, Davies-Netzley (1998) interviewed both men and women who were either corporate presidents or CEOs within their organizations, and the men's and women's experiences differed dramatically. The men described climbing the career ladder easily and successfully and described their success in terms of performance and winning. Of the women who were interviewed, each gave examples of facing gender discrimination and of having colleagues who questioned their ability to manage both a career and a family. They each also spoke of being left out of the informal activities and networking that took place within the organization. Additionally, each woman described settings in which opportunities were difficult to take advantage of unless you were a White male and that hard work alone was not enough to be successful. Most women spoke of the old boys' network and a male-dominated culture. As described by one female, "the only women they wanted at the top were the ones they placed there as tokens," and all of the women interviewed considered themselves to be "outsiders to a system that accommodates men" (Davies-Netzley, 1998, p. 347). They described the need to be like their male peers and developed strategies for fitting in that included changes to their speech, behavior, and their attire. When the men were asked about the absence of women at the highest levels, they responded by suggesting that women lacked the skills necessary to attain these levels and also that family conflicts prevented them from committing the time necessary to be successful in such roles.

An interesting perspective on stereotypes is described by Ridgeway (2001) in the context of expectation states theory. Expectation states theory describes how individuals

have expectations about the traits, abilities, and competencies of others, similar to the notion of stereotypes. Gender is built into this schema along with rules for the gender system, and gender stereotypes contain status beliefs reflecting the positions of various groups within the social hierarchy. These status beliefs separate society into groups based on gender, race, education, and occupation, and rankings are established among the groups based on the legitimacy and competency of its members. These status beliefs also influence the ways in which group members access rewards, how they are evaluated and how they may or may not attain power, wealth, and authority. Ridgeway (2001) argues that status beliefs work to the detriment of women and create obstacles for those seeking positions of leadership. Gender stereotypes play into the formation of social hierarchies and work to restrict women's access and ability to gain legitimacy. "More than a trait of individuals, gender is an institutionalized system of social practices for constituting males and females as different in socially significant ways and organizing inequality in terms of those differences" (Ridgeway, 2001, p. 637).

The effects of leadership stereotypes are also present in other ways. Butler and Geis (1990) conducted an experiment looking at nonverbal reactions of subjects who observed women and men in leadership roles. The premise supporting this test was the violation of the female stereotype which dictates that women should not be dominant or assertive and should not display competence to the extent that a man should. Embedded in this argument is that the reactions to this stereotype are automatic and are therefore not necessarily recognized as being activated. When this happens, the woman pays the price. Instead of the subject realizing that a stereotype has been triggered, the woman is viewed negatively as if she has done something wrong and is considered to be incompetent. The

authors argue that if this is what is happening, then a woman who displays these qualities is not viewed with satisfaction. The study results showed that subjects challenged the female leaders more frequently than male leaders, and the male leader was viewed as having more leadership qualities than the female leader. In addition, the female leader received more negative and fewer positive responses than the male leader for the same behaviors, so the study's hypothesis was confirmed. It was also the case that the non-leader female elicited fewer negative responses than the dominant female while also eliciting more negative responses than the non-leader male. A test of women and men as co-leads was also conducted. Women had lower ratings than men, leading the authors to suggest that subjects listened to the men and simply ignored the women. This study clearly demonstrates the devaluing of females in leadership roles, and, as described by the authors, "for women, it appears that simply offering a substantive contribution is enough to elicit others' displeasure" (Butler & Geis, 1990, p. 54).

**Stereotype threat.** Stereotype threat also works to the detriment of female leaders. Expectation states theory as described by Ridgeway (2001) discusses how behavioral expectations, colored by gender stereotypes, are created for groups. The lower status afforded to women, supported by expectation states, restricts their mobility and ability to exercise authority. The expectations of others are known and influence how one responds in a given situation based on one's role combined with the anticipated response of others. Gender status beliefs are activated when gender becomes salient in a given situation. These beliefs are tied to general beliefs and attitudes about skills and competency, and they shape expectations for behavior as well as its outcome. When women assume a leadership role, according to Ridgeway (2001), two things happen.

While the performance expectation of a leader affords her status, her gender role serves to undermine that, and she is still perceived to be less competent than a man in the same role. Secondly, when a woman exerts authority, she violates gender status beliefs which may result in negative reactions and resistance. Because lower status individuals are afforded less legitimacy, her abilities are compromised. Knowing that she is in this tenuous situation, a woman may choose to alter her behavior to account for and mitigate her performance expectations. In summary, the gender status beliefs which are grounded in expectations that reflect gender roles and stereotypes establish and maintain hierarchies of control, legitimacy, and authority.

A study by Biernat and Danaher (2012) explored whether members of a negatively stereotyped group would interpret negative feedback as negative to a greater degree than members of a positively stereotyped group. Specifically, men and women were given negative feedback about a leadership task they were asked to perform. Both the women's and men's interpretations of the degree of negativity were equal. However, the women interpreted the negative feedback as objectively more negative than did the men. In addition, women assumed they were held to a lower standard than were the men. After receipt of the negative feedback, the women displayed a significant drop in the importance with which they held leadership whereas the men did not, and their leadership performance dropped after receipt of the negative feedback. Biernat and Danaher (2012) suggest that negatively stereotyped groups may evaluate feedback with the limitations of the stereotype in mind. This kind of feedback loop can only serve to perpetuate the stereotype and work to the detriment of women.

The extent to which an environment is ripe for stereotype activation has been

shown to moderate the effects of stereotype threat. Research conducted by Davies, Spencer, and Steele (2005) was designed to explore the impact of stereotype threat on the aspirations of women and to specifically examine its effect on women's desire to pursue leadership roles. When the female stereotype was activated, women's leadership aspirations were lowered in favor of pursuing a non-threatening activity. Conversely, when no activation occurred, their aspirations remained intact. However, when stereotypes were activated, and the threat of stereotype was neutralized by supporting and confirming women's participation, leadership aspirations still remained intact. This research provided evidence that activating the female leadership stereotype undermined women's leadership aspirations, while providing a safe environment despite the activation of stereotypes eliminated the stereotype threat.

Another example of the neutralization of stereotypes is provided in research conducted by Hoyt and Blascovich (2010). In this experiment, female leaders rated as high and low in leader self-efficacy were compared when primed with a negative female stereotype. Cardiovascular readings were taken, and self-reports of the experiment were submitted. Overall results indicated that the high-efficacy leaders demonstrated signs of stereotype threat, while the low-efficacy group did not. However, instead of responding negatively based on vulnerability, the high self-efficacy leaders responded by reactance, which means they worked harder to avoid the stereotype rather than to succumb and reduce their efforts thereby confirming the stereotype. They were, in essence, working against the threat of the negative stereotype. Physiological measures, though, were also taken, and cardiovascular results did indicate a level of stress that was created by the threat. The authors caution that, although the high efficacy leaders avoided the outcome

of stereotype threat, physiologically, the threat was still present. The authors suggest that women having to work under these conditions over the long run may suffer health consequences as a result.

### **The Glass Ceiling**

The term “glass ceiling” was first used in 1986 in a *New York Times* article discussing the dearth of women in corporate leadership roles and the invisible yet impenetrable barrier that restrains them (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986). To explore this problem, Ann Morrison and a few colleagues (see Morrison, White, Van Velsor, & The Center for Creative Leadership, 1987) joined forces with the Center for Creative Leadership to develop the Executive Women Project. Five basic research questions fueled the effort, and 76 executive women were interviewed. A premise of the research was to explore the notion of the glass ceiling—“a transparent barrier that kept women from rising above a certain level in corporations....[and which] applies to women as a group who are kept from advancing higher *because they are women*” (Morrison, et al., 1987, p. 13).

The women’s responses were compared to male executives’ responses from prior studies, and it was found that women credited their success more often than men to having had help from above, being easy to get along with, and being able to adapt. Additionally, however, the women also more often noted taking risks, being tough, having the desire to succeed, and having an impressive presence. From the authors’ standpoint, women executives had to work harder and have fewer weaknesses to be successful than did the male executives. Beyond these conditions, it was also cited that women, having broken through the glass ceiling, “encounter another barrier—a wall of

tradition and stereotype that separates them from the top executive level” (Morrison, et al., 1987, p. 14).

In 1989, the federal government commissioned a study to further explore the glass ceiling, defined by the government as “those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upwards in their organization into management level positions” (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991, p. 1). Several prior studies had shown that women were underrepresented in general and upper management roles, making up between 3 and 6% of top executives, so the Department of Labor set out to explore this condition. Nine Fortune 500 companies were identified for review with goals set to identify systemic barriers to the advancement of women, to eliminate these barriers, and to develop an understanding of how these barriers work toward the detriment of women.

Study findings concluded that there was a point at which the presence of women declined significantly and that minorities were even less represented than women. Originally intended to concentrate on the highest levels of leadership, the focus did have to shift to lower levels, as, in some cases, women simply were not present. Exacerbating the problem was the fact that monitoring for equal access and opportunity was not considered to be a corporate responsibility nor was it part of management’s developmental and planning efforts. Recruitment practices were skewed, and internal development programs and opportunities for enhancing credentials were not made available to women and minorities. Record-keeping was inadequate, appraisal and compensation systems were not monitored, and job titles and compensation levels were inconsistent.

An important outcome of this study was the establishment of the Glass Ceiling Act of 1991, which was enacted into law as Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1991. A Glass Ceiling Commission was founded to explore the barriers that create obstacles to the advancement of women and minorities and to recommend ways to increase their opportunities and developmental experiences in the work place. The Commission published two reports in 1995, and the first of these (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995, March) explored the current landscape of corporate leadership and the barriers to advancement faced by five underrepresented groups in upper-level management: women of all races, and African American, American Indian, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Hispanic American males.

Three types of barriers were identified in the study. Societal barriers related to education and advancement as well as stereotyping and discrimination accounted for one level of impediment. According to Morrison (1992) and consistent with the Commission's findings, "prejudice continues to permeate organizations in subtle, nearly invisible forms because stereotypic assumptions have been built into their organizational norms and everyday practices" (p. 33). A second level included internal organizational policies and practices and corporate cultures that alienated women and minorities as well as a lack of training, mentoring, and development of these employees in order to foster their growth and advancement. The government conceded its role in the third identified barrier such that law enforcement, oversight, and reporting were identified as weak and contributed to the failure to identify the discrimination faced by the underrepresented groups.

A second report was published in November and confirmed that "the glass ceiling



is a reality in corporate America. Glass ceiling barriers continue to deny untold numbers of qualified people the opportunity to compete for and hold executive level positions in the private sector” (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995, November, p. 9). The purpose of this follow-up report was to make recommendations for eliminating the barriers imposed upon women and minorities that hindered their mobility and advancement in corporate world. Business and government were both targeted for improvement in areas ranging from commitment to diversity and education to improvement of data collection and reporting and strengthening of anti-discrimination laws.

Despite the findings and recommendations of the Glass Ceiling Commission, women are still underrepresented in top management roles and continue to struggle for equality. In a Catalyst (Carter & Silva, 2011) study which explored the strategies and outcomes of female and male MBA graduates, it was found that both men and women utilized strategies for advancing up the proverbial ladder including such things as seeking new opportunities and high profile assignments, making achievements visible, getting formal training, and connecting with influential leaders. While both sexes adhered to prescribed behaviors for advancement, men were more successful than women in obtaining recognition. Men were promoted more often than women, and the gender pay gap between women's and men's salaries steadily increased over time. In addition, changing jobs resulted in greater salaries for men, while women fared better when they stayed with their current employer.

Goodman, Fields, and Blum’s (2003) study revealed similarly that the lack of women in top leadership roles was not due to differences in their career aspirations or

their values. It was also found that women were more likely to hold top management positions when there were more women present at lower levels of management. Other factors supported the presence of greater numbers of women in top slots including higher management turnover, lower management salaries, and greater emphasis on promotion and development. Reasons associated with these differences included the positive effect of greater numbers of women present at lower levels within the organization as well as the positive impact of training and development on women's opportunities. Baxter and Wright (2000) determined that not only were women less likely to hold higher level positions but also were much more likely than men to be in a non-management role as opposed to a supervisory role. Significant evidence was provided in support of the notion that a gender gap existed relative to the general lack of women in positions of authority. Stated clearly, "the very low representation of women at the top of authority hierarchies may create an appearance of a glass ceiling...where in fact discrimination is either more or less constant throughout the organization or even concentrated at the bottom" (Baxter & Wright, 2000, p. 290).

Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, and Vanneman (2001) conducted a study that confirmed the presence of a glass ceiling for both women and minorities. To create an operational definition of the glass ceiling, four criteria were used to define the term glass ceiling. A review of its use in the then-recent literature shaped the definition. The four criteria were (a) a gender or racial inequality which is not explained by job-relevant characteristics of the employee, (b) an inequality which is more prominent at higher levels of an organization than at lower levels, (c) the inequality points to the opportunity for advancement by women and minorities and not just their presence at higher levels, (d)

the occurrence of the glass ceiling will increase over the course of one's career. Data from 1976 through 1993 were utilized, looking specifically at earnings relative to gender, ethnicity, and work experience. It was found that the magnitude of earning differentials increased over time and also accelerated over time. Both women and African Americans had lower earnings growth over time, and the annual changes were less than those of White males. With each year of experience, earnings fell further behind. As concluded by this study, if the glass ceiling is construed as a condition that worsens over time and becomes more severe as women and minorities attempt to attain higher levels of management, then the glass ceiling as such does exist as evidenced by earnings differentials between men and women.

In a study that paralleled the Cotter et al. (2001) study, Maume (2004) evaluated position attainment as opposed to earnings. Maume's (2004) findings were generally consistent with the earlier study—the glass ceiling does exist as a condition that disadvantages women and African Americans and worsens over time. However, Maume (2004) found that managerial attainment differed in context for different groups. For example, hours worked helped women, while it didn't help African American men. At the same time, youth worked to the advantage of African American males. African American females, however, were excluded from the managerial ranks altogether. Relative to position attainment, Maume (2004) summarizes by saying, "qualitative evidence shows that powerful White men prefer to promote managerial candidates who are socially similar to them" (p. 268).

Based on some research, women who break through the glass ceiling do so to face a glass cliff. The notion of a glass cliff is used to describe the supposition that women are

often hired into precarious leadership roles and in these roles face detrimental outcomes. One particular study explored company performance relative to the appointment of men and women to their boards (Ryan & Haslam, 2005). While no drop in company performance was identified after the appointment of either men or women, it was determined that company performance prior to the appointment was significantly worse for those organizations who appointed women. In 2008, Haslam and Ryan conducted three studies which revealed that women were more likely to be selected for the primary leadership role when the organization was failing rather than when its performance was improving. These results support the hypothesis that women face a glass cliff once they have penetrated the glass ceiling suggesting that women chosen for leadership roles often face more difficult circumstances than men. That women are more likely to end up in this precarious position is explained again in terms that reflect a double-bind. While breaking through the glass ceiling supports the notion that women have the leadership skills necessary to bring an organization out of turmoil, whether she succeeds may be less important as she is seen as expendable. Furthermore, being in such a position can work to a woman's detriment if the company in fact fails. That failure will reflect more on her capabilities than on the fact that the organization was headed in that direction before she assumed the leadership role.

The following year, Adams, Gupta, and Leeth (2009) conducted the same kind of study to determine if a glass cliff was present for women hired as CEOs. When examining the financial condition of firms, findings concluded that women were not hired as CEOs primarily at at-risk companies. Women were, in fact, hired when companies were doing well or were hired into companies at similar financial positions as

those that hired men CEOs.

According to Kephart and Schumacher (2005), women are getting leadership experience in the corporate world and are then abandoning it in order to become entrepreneurs. Between 1997 and 2002, there was a 14% increase in the number of companies owned by women and a 170% increase in construction businesses and a 112% increase in manufacturing businesses all started by women. The unfriendly environment for women leaders makes them opt out of the difficult position they're in, favoring a setting in which they can flourish. According to England (2010), women are moving into arenas traditionally held only by men, but there is no movement in the opposite direction, as jobs that are feminine in nature are devalued. The fact that traditionally male jobs pay more than female jobs is incentive for both sexes to pursue male occupations. While the trend in the U.S. and in many other countries is an increase in the proportion of women in the labor force and an increase in the numbers of them in management positions, they continue to be hovered in lower level positions and are scarcely found in the upper echelons of executive management (Powell, 2012).

### **Leadership Style and Effectiveness**

Eagly (2007) describes the position of female leaders as constituting both advantage and disadvantage. While more women are present in leadership roles than ever before and cultural attitudes of acceptance toward women in these roles are becoming more prevalent, an overview of research provides evidence of progress and evidence of obstacles. According to Eagly (2007), the advantage can be seen in research on leadership style. Women display transformational behaviors which have been linked to effective leadership (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). The disadvantage is that leadership is still

viewed in stereotypical ways with the man seen as having the necessary qualities, while those attributed to women contradict the leadership stereotype (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). With regard to effectiveness, women are held to a double standard that requires exceptional display of capability, while at the same time, they are not recognized for their accomplishments.

**Leadership style.** In a study exploring the leadership traits of women and men as reported by their subordinates, Bass, Avolio, and Atwater (1996) found that both females and males reported that women displayed more transformational leadership traits than men. Prior organizational studies have established that there are no significant differences between women and men relative to leadership style when traditional traits and skills such as interpersonal or task-related styles are considered (Eagly & Johnson, 1990), but differences between the sexes with regard to transformational versus transactional leadership styles have been identified (Bass, Avolio, & Atwater, 1996; Rosener 1990).

Transformational leadership involves including and developing followers while gaining their trust and confidence. Subordinates are mentored and empowered to contribute toward the goals of the organization. Transactional leaders, on the other hand, establish give-and-take scenarios by making clear the expectations of followers and subsequently providing reward/punishment feedback. The laissez-faire mode of leadership denotes a general lack of assuming responsibility for leading (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003). Bass et al. (1996) found that female leaders were more transformational and received higher ratings on traits associated with individual, group, and organizational performance. The women also received lower ratings of the laissez-faire leadership style. Findings from a leadership survey

commissioned by the Leadership Foundation of the International Women's Forum highlight similar differences in the ways that women and men lead (Rosener, 1990). Men were inclined to perform in a transactional way offering rewards and punishment for the achievement or lack of achievement of their subordinates. Women, on the other hand, described their style in what Rosener (1990) has labeled interactive leadership. This approach emphasizes encouraging participation, enhancing others' self-worth, sharing power and information, and recognizing and energizing others.

Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003) identified 45 quantitative studies exploring transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership, and the studies were of the leaders themselves or of leaders' subordinates, their peers, or superiors. This meta-analysis revealed that female leaders exhibited more transformational traits than men. Relative to transactional leadership, women displayed more contingent reward behavior than men, and men exhibited greater management by exception behavior than women and also scored higher in the laissez-fair leadership mode. Management by exception entails monitoring the behavior of subordinates and intervening only when a problem arises. Laissez-faire leadership is described as the avoidance of taking on an active leadership role in order to avoid conflicts and involves such things as procrastination and the failure to become involved with the development of subordinates. Contingent reward behavior entails constructive interaction with followers such that appropriate and expected behaviors are discussed and negotiated, and leaders give recognition and reward subsequent appropriate behavior (Bass et al., 1996).

Along the lines of leadership stereotypes, Eagly and Johnson's (1990) meta-analysis of 162 leadership studies showed slight evidence of stereotypes under certain

conditions. No significant difference in leadership behavior was found when comparing women and men in organizational studies. In these studies, women and men did not differ in the use of interpersonal and task-oriented styles, but women did display a more democratic as opposed to autocratic style than men. The authors suggest that this lack of difference is due to the prescriptive nature of leadership roles within organizations and that behavior is more closely aligned with the managerial role as opposed to the gender role.

In lab and assessment studies, however, women were found to use more democratic and interpersonal styles, while men were more task-oriented and used autocratic styles. Thus, in lab settings, leader behavior was consistent with gender stereotypes. The difference in outcomes based on experiment setting is attributed by the authors to the fact that the lab setting is more conducive to eliciting traditional, stereotypic responses and expected gender roles. In an organizational setting where behavior is less regulated than in a lab, the managerial role has the greater influence on behavior. Eagly and Johnson (1990) also suggest that women's tendency toward democratic/participatory styles may be a result of their greater social skills but also may be used as a means to calm the fears those who may be resistant to a female leader.

Another leadership meta-analysis was conducted by Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky (1992) to determine if the equivalent leadership behaviors of women and men favored men when other factors were held constant. In this overview, it was determined that men had an advantage over women, as women were generally evaluated less favorably than men. In support of role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002), it held that women and men who led with gender-consistent styles received more favorable



ratings than women and men whose style was inconsistent with the gender stereotype. In particular, men who led in an autocratic fashion were rated as more effective than autocratic women, and masculine leadership styles produced a greater difference favoring male leaders overall. Likewise when roles were gender-dominated, evaluations were more favorable when the leader's gender was the consistent with the task, and there was evidence that male subordinates preferred a male leader.

**Leadership effectiveness.** In a synthesis of studies that compared the effectiveness of female and male leaders, no significant differences in leadership effectiveness were present (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995). However, looking more closely at the data, some differences were identified. Findings revealed that the successful leader is context-specific and that men were viewed as effective leaders in roles that were stereotypically male and women in roles that were stereotypically female. Put another way, when the leadership role was stereotypically more masculine, men were seen as more effective leaders. At the same time, when the leadership role held a feminine context, the woman was perceived to be the more effective leader. Additionally, when the role was task-focused, men were considered stronger leaders, and when the role required social skills, the women fared better. In essence, women and men were viewed as more effective with their leadership role was consistent with their gender role. Beyond consistency with gender roles, males were viewed as especially effective when the majority of subordinates were male. Despite the lack of significant differences between women and men, women face a disadvantage in traditionally male roles and in male-dominated settings.

When evaluating leadership differences by organization type, those involved in

business, education, and government or social service showed weak support for female-typed leadership. Looking at leadership level, male leadership was favored at top levels of management, while women were favored at the middle level. Eagly et al. (1995) relate this to the spill-over of gender role into organizational role and the influences of these expectations as they relate to assessments of leader effectiveness.

Other studies have confirmed that women and men perform equally well as leaders. When looking at the success or failure of organizations, Heimovics (1988) found no differences based on the gender of the organizational leader. Both females and males attributed their success to hard work and ability and assumed responsibility for their failures. Likewise, Cann's (1990) study of leadership traits revealed that both masculine and feminine characteristics were viewed as relevant and necessary for effective leadership. According to Eagly and Carli (2003), the effectiveness and success of a leader is dependent upon context and also upon the followers. There is a convergence taking place that has brought more women into the workplace as well as more women into leadership positions, and, at the same time, the context of leadership itself is changing. Autocratic and democratic theories of leadership are being overshadowed by newer, contemporary approaches that see leaders as those who can develop teams, involve individuals, support and nurture.

Given that some of these qualities are aligned with the female stereotype, the notion of women being unsuitable for leadership may be waning. Furst and Reeves (2008) point out that women are urged to be aggressive, take on challenges, and make bold decisions. Given the links to transformational leadership and its effectiveness, it may also be advantageous for women to rely on and utilize their stereotypic skills of care-

giving, facilitation, and relationship-building. Koenig's et al.'s (2011) meta-analysis also revealed that the leadership/masculine stereotype has weakened over time. Some similarities between leaders and women are emerging. The authors suggest that these changes, which reflect the importance of qualities such as warmth, caring, and sensitivity, have found their way into the model of the ideal leader perhaps due to the increased presence and acceptance of women in leadership roles and also quite possibly to the failure of the traditional leader/role model to lead as effectively as is needed in today's organizations.

Some studies, though, have provided evidence that women are more effective leaders than men. A Catalyst (2004) study of Fortune 500 companies with women board directors and those without found significant positive differences in the financial outcomes when women were present for at least four years with the organization versus those organization in which fewer or no women board directors were present. For companies with a sustained presence of female directors, significant positive differences in return on sales, return on invested capital, and return on equity were found. In essence, those Fortune 500 companies led by women outperformed similar organizations led by men.

Catalyst (2004, January) conducted a second study of Fortune 500 companies and compared financial data from those companies between 1996 and 2000. Results determined that companies with the highest representation of women in the top levels of management outperformed companies that had the lowest representation of women on their management teams. A similar study of Fortune 1000 companies (Krishnan & Park, 2005) explored the relationship of the presence of women on top management teams and

the effectiveness of the organization. Results confirmed that those organizations with women present on their TMTs outperformed those with fewer or no women. As a further test, it was determined that external factors had no significant impact on the organizations' performance lending credence to the credit given women for their success.

Positive correlations have been established between transformational leadership as well as the contingent reward style of transactional leadership and leader effectiveness, while management by exception and laissez-faire leadership have correlated negatively with leader effectiveness (Bass & Avolio, 1990). The Bass, Avolio, and Atwater study in 1996 established a link between transformational leadership and women's leadership styles thus implying that women are more effective leaders. A study of teams revealed that women's presence on teams increased the team's effectiveness with regard to problem-solving (Hirschfeld, Jordan, Feild, Giles, & Armenakis, 2005). This experiment was conducted in a traditional male setting, and teams were predominantly male. However, the presence of women did not denigrate perceived team potency, their social cohesion, or teamwork. To the contrary, a leadership study of the effectiveness of gender on leadership revealed that the greater the number of females within an organization, the greater the preference for participatory leadership, assertiveness, and the greater the desire for gender egalitarianism (Herrera, Duncan, Green, & Skaggs, 2012). Cumulatively, these findings support the notion that transformational leadership is effective and that women are transformational leaders.

Duehr and Bono (2006) replicated the work of previous studies to gauge the level of change in the presence of stereotypic beliefs held by female and male managers and students. Comparing their results with past studies up to 30 years prior, a significant

change in the perception of female managers by male managers was present. The men's attitudes changed relative to now seeing similarities between female managers and successful managers, and women displayed a bias toward female managers. When evaluating students' views of successful managers, however, male students' perceptions were consistent with the perceptions of male managers from 15 years ago that viewed women in more stereotypic ways and as not having the requisite skills to be effective managers. Additionally, with regard to male managers, when controlling for age, education, and management level, men's views of women managers were less consistent with those of a successful manager. The authors suggest congruence in these outcomes with social role theory in that the presence of women and men in similar roles lends itself to gender stereotyping.

Schein's research in the 1970s established the "think manager-think male" phenomenon. Both women (Schein, 1975) and men (Schein, 1973) perceived that successful managers were more likely to be men than women. Brenner, Tomkiewicz, and Schein replicated these studies in 1989 and found that, while men still held the same opinion, women did not, clearly reflecting a change in attitude—but only by women. A similar study in 1995 (Dodge, Gilroy & Fenzel) of MBA students had the same results, and a more recent study by Stoker, Van der Velde, and Lammers (2012) still indicates that the male/leader stereotype persists, particularly among men. To develop a global perspective on managerial stereotypes, international studies were conducted in Germany and the United Kingdom (Schein & Mueller 1992), and China and Japan (Schein, Mueller, Lituchy, & Liu, 1996). In all four countries, the stereotype of men as leaders rang true for both women and men. Despite women's advances in the workplace, an

international perspective of gendered roles for leaders highlights that women are at a disadvantage not just in the United States but globally.

Stereotypes of women persist and impact their entry and advancement in organizational settings. Corporate America is strong evidence of this. Now we turn to explore the condition of women in the higher education environment.

### **Women in Higher Education**

We have explored the notion of stereotypes and determined that they are prevalent and persistent. Women are generally described as warm, receptive, and passive, while men are described as determined, strong, and aggressive. These characteristics not only describe the two genders but also connote the behavior and traits that are expected of women and men. Stereotypes are present in the workplace, and they often result in discrimination and marginalization of disadvantaged groups. They play a role as obstacles to the entry and advancement of women and contribute to organizations' culture and climate and the enforcement of stereotyped norms. Stereotypes interfere with women's ability to assume and advance in leadership roles, as the stereotypes of women and leaders are incongruent. This dissonance results in obstacles for women as well as persons of color, constrains what is accepted as effective leadership, and results in the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles. We turn now to explore the condition of women in higher education and how gender stereotypes, leadership stereotypes, and organizational culture have impacted their presence among leaders in our higher education institutions.

### **A Look Back in Time**

Women made their entrée into higher education against much resistance in the

1830s. Oberlin College was the first college to open its doors to women in 1837 while having admitted the first African-American students in 1835. Women-only colleges were established in the mid-1800s, first at Vassar in 1865, then Smith and Wellesley in 1875. The resistance to educating women was great, as women were expected only to serve their husbands and raise their families (Nidiffer, 2001a). As women were not expected or typically permitted to move outside of these roles, there was no rationale for their college participation, and attacks on coeducation were common. Positioning women to move outside of prescribed gender roles posed a threat to their education. Arguments against educating women ranged from the supposition that this would result in the creation of women who were unfit for marriage to the belief that this would harm a woman's ability to conceive a child (Nidiffer, 2001a). In 1837, a Harvard University professor proclaimed, "Identical education of the two sexes is a crime before God and humanity, that physiology protests against, and that experience weeps over" (Clarke, 1837, p. 127).

A motivating force behind the education of women was merely to support the education of men, and women's education was viewed as a way to produce more highly educated men (Chliwniak, 1997). When colleges opened their doors to women, it was also for economical reasons, as tax payers demanded the opportunity for both their sons and daughters, and creating coeducational institutions was considered to be economically feasible (Nidiffer, 2001a). The first generation of college-going women comprised 2.2 percent of the 18-21 year-old females, and the majority of all first-generation students attended coeducational institutions. By 1920, nearly 50 percent of all college students were women, and 80 percent of them attended coeducational schools. Early in the 20th century, however, women's presence in colleges and not as homemakers resulted in

women marrying later and having fewer if any children. Deemed "race suicide" (Nidiffer, 2001a, p. 21), this impingement on traditional gender roles was seen as a detriment to society as a whole. Women's attendance in college, however, was rare and was generally disapproved of. The Morrill Act, passed in 1862, committed the government to giving each state some portion of public land, which established the foundation for our state systems of higher education and opened the doors to public education for many. While access to private education remained restricted primarily to men, the Morrill Act opened the doors for many women.

**First jobs for women in higher education.** As educating males became more common, a role for women outside the home as teachers had become established. Women proved they could handle the demands of college, and some moved into higher education as a profession. Women's presence as employees in higher education, though, was visible primarily in teacher preparation and home economics programs. Women employed in higher education in the early 20th century were teachers of "domestic science,... and home economics departments became a ghetto of sorts for women academics unable to secure positions in other disciplines" (Nidiffer, 2001a, p. 25). Fear of the feminization of certain disciplines promoted the separation of curricular paths for males and females, and some schools considered limiting the number of admitted women, separating them in all subjects, and even prohibiting the admission of women altogether. These early remnants of segregation promoted not only the separation of students but also the segregation of disciplines based on gender.

Deans of Women were the first administrative positions that materialized for women, and Oberlin College was the first to appoint a "Lady Principal of the Female



Department" (Nidiffer, 2001b, p. 136) in 1835. This position was created to manage and supervise the conduct and behavior of female students and was spurred by the concerns regarding coeducation. Initially established at universities that provided on-campus housing for both female and male students, these residential colleges wanted a means by which to supervise the female students. Through the 1890s, however, negativity toward women on campus "created an environment that ranged from inhospitable to openly hostile,...and administrators ...were obligated to worry about the 'woman problem'" (Nidiffer, 2001b, p. 138). The solution was to hire a dean of women. The creation of this position was the foundation and path for women to actually secure a professional administrative role at coeducational colleges and universities, and most institutions employed them between 1920 through the 1970s. Nidiffer (2001b) compares this role, however, with the other path carved out for women, that of teaching home economics, and describes it as one that "contributed to the ghettoizing of women into administrative roles that became essentially student affairs positions and, consequently, undervalued by the academy" (Nidiffer, 2001b, p. 151).

A more important precedent for women leaders in higher education was the appointment of women presidents to women-only colleges in the 19th century. While these women relied on the support of men and were still subservient to male boards of trustees and even more powerful entities such as the Catholic church, they navigated their way through the myriad of issues and politics to set the stage for the presence of women in major roles in higher education administration (Introcaso, 2001). According to Paul (2001), physical education in colleges and universities has its roots tied to the then-belief that participation in college was detrimental to women's physical and mental well being.

This fear fueled the interest in and adoption of physical education for both male and female students. The inclusion of this new field led the way for women to become employed by colleges and universities, and it was formally established as a profession in 1885. Not only did it open the door of opportunity for women in higher education but also became established at the national level, allowing women to meet collectively in a legitimized fashion. While women in this profession had little credibility and held no academic rank, this development in the history of higher education is significant due to the eventual emergence of intercollegiate sports and subsequently the passage of Title IX.

**Growth in numbers.** By 1900, there were just over 1,000 colleges and universities, and women made up close to 37% of enrolled students. Female enrollment peaked in 1920 at 47% but thereafter continued to decline to a low of 30% in 1950 without peaking again until 1980. Along with female enrollment, the numbers of institutions continued to climb through 1930 but then leveled off until the 1960s (Miller Solomon, 1985). Most colleges and universities, however, had little interest in enrolling women (Levine, 1986). Consistent with gender roles, women were excluded from the privilege of a college education, as it was understood that their place was in the home. Some schools established quotas on the number of women who were admitted, while those schools enrolling women "pushed...[them] onto the sidelines" (Levine, 1985, p.124) and kept them concentrated in less prestigious areas of study and those that were distinctly feminine. Minority female students faced even greater restrictions because of their ethnicity. In the 1920s and 1930s, admission policies progressed from selective to restrictive, intentionally and systematically denying admission to "socially undesirable candidates" (Levine, 1986, p. 146). A sexist and racist division of labor was accepted by

the American population, and so these practices were supported and enforced.

Prior to World War I, college attendance had not been linked to economic opportunity and success, but the war changed that (Levine, 1986). Government and business began to promote the notion of a higher education as a means to gain access to management and technical jobs that were created as a result of the war. In 1918, the government established formal relationships with colleges through the creation of the Student Army Training Corps which provided funding for the education of men to assume leadership positions to support the war and post-war eras. The war itself triggered an explosion of subjects and disciplines, and the demand for higher education increased substantially between World War I and World War II. Links had become established between a college degree and economic success and prosperity, as well as status and prestige for the college graduate. These opportunities, however, were limited to White males from upper-class backgrounds, while poor White males, women, and minorities were much less likely to attain a college education or reap the benefits of it (Levine, 1986).

The GI Bill, passed in 1944, gave educational benefits to returning veterans, and the enrollments of men swelled at the expense of the education of women (Miller Solomon, 1985). While this "male priority" (Miller Solomon, 1985, p. 189) was accepted, it caused women to become displaced not only from colleges and universities but also from the workplace. "In peacetime, American women lacked clout at the highest levels everywhere—in the industrial labor force, in academia, and in the professions" (Miller Solomon, 1985, p. 189). The Second World War again fueled the growth and importance of higher education but for a select few. In 1947, the government acknowledged the

isolation and discrimination latent in college admissions and enrollment by highlighting the failure of universities to provide equality in educational opportunity and attainment. Interestingly, in the Commission on Higher Education report of 1947, women were not identified among the disparaged groups (as cited in Miller Solomon, 1985). Inequality in education was described as limiting opportunity such that

...the kind and amount of education [students] may hope to attend depends, not on their own abilities, but on the family or community into which they happened to be born, or worse still, on the color of their skin or the religion of their parents. (as cited in Levine, 1986, p. 216).

Unfortunately and despite the rhetoric, access to college for women and minorities continued to be restricted.

Despite women's success in academe, there was a social price tag associated with a woman who pursued a college education (Miller Solomon, 1985). Even with a degree, most women were expected to pursue employment only up to the time that she would marry and begin to raise a family. Motherhood was seen as her primary role, and women who desired a career were best to leave their ambitions secret. Those who continued to work after having children were still expected to be exceptional mothers, and their employment was grounded in more stereotypical fields such as teaching, nursing, social work, and low-level management. High level jobs with status and prestige were reserved for men. Both discrimination and a lack of incentive for women resulted in fewer women advancing in the professions.

### **An Era of Change**

A number of events of the 1960s catapulted the disadvantaged position of women

into the national spotlight (Miller Solomon, 1985). It had become evident that although women were permitted to a degree to work alongside men, they did not participate equally with regard to policy- and decision-making. "Most men considered women's opinions as secondary" (as cited in Miller Solomon, 1985, p. 202). In 1963, Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* which brought to light the fact that many women were dissatisfied with their limited social positions and correspondingly limited opportunities. "The seeds of a new feminism were being planted" (Miller Solomon, 1985, p. 200), and the women's movement had begun. In the 1960s, the combination of the fight for civil rights alongside the fight for gender equality fueled a number of federal legislative actions.

**The government takes action.** The National Women's Party, supporting women's rights, caught President Kennedy's attention, and in 1961, he appointed the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women to explore issues related to the status of women (Glazer-Raymo, 1999). Two years later, the Equal Pay Act was passed making it unlawful to pay men and women different wages for the same work. Also in 1961, President Kennedy issued Executive Order (EO) 10925 which, for the first time, used the phrase affirmative action, calling on federal contractors to "take affirmative action to ensure that...applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin" (as cited in Glazer-Raymo, 1999, p. 13). The Executive Order, however, excluded women. The President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity was established to oversee this order. President Kennedy was also responsible for proposing the first major civil rights bill of the century (Rai & Critzer, 2000) which would be passed in 1964, the year after his

assassination, by President Johnson's administration.

As it came to be known, The Civil Rights Act of 1964, while enforcing voting rights, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, and religion, and desegregating public facilities and public education, also addressed equal employment opportunity. Title VII of the Act made it illegal to discriminate against any individual in hiring, firing, compensation, or by any means related to terms, conditions, or privileges of employment based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Government contractors, private employers, and employment agencies were subject to Title VII compliance, and under these regulations, complainants had 180 days to file charges of discrimination. The addition of "sex" as a discriminatory category was a last-minute inclusion made by Congressman Howard Smith of Virginia who opposed the Act and thought the inclusion of women would ensure its rejection. Other supporters of Title VII also opposed the addition, but Congresswoman Katherine St. George of New York argued to the advantage of women, stating, "we outlast you, we outlive you,...we are entitled to this little crumb of equality" (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d., Sex discrimination section, para. 2).

In September of 1965, Executive Order 11246 was signed. This law reaffirmed the ban against discrimination in hiring practices based on race, color, religion, and national origin. Once again, women were excluded. EO 11246 required contractors receiving federal funding to take affirmative action to ensure that all individuals have an equal opportunity at employment. It required that any employer with 50 or more employees receiving federal funding perform a self-audit of its workforce and develop and implement a written affirmative action program to hire and include minorities to the

extent that they are available for employment in the workforce. Based on the results of the audit, employers were to establish numeric goals to reduce the underutilization of minorities and expand efforts to recruit, hire, and train qualified personnel from these underrepresented populations.

Two years later in 1967, President Johnson amended EO 11246 in the form of EO 11375 which stated that "it is desirable that the equal employment opportunity programs provided for in EO 11246 expressly embrace discrimination on account of sex" (as cited in Glazer-Raymo, 1999, p. 15), and women became a protected group under affirmative action regulations. Similar to the two prior Executive Orders addressing affirmative action, EO 11375

...mandated that federal contractors take affirmative action in the recruitment, hiring, employment, compensation, and training of employees regardless of sex, and file compliance reports of affirmative cooperation. For the first time, universities with federal contracts would be forbidden from discriminating on the basis of sex in employment. (Glazer-Raymo, 1999, p. 15).

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was also established as an outcome of The Civil Rights Act of 1964 to investigate charges of discrimination but at that time was given no authority to enforce the Act. In 1966, while over half of the charges filed with the EEOC were related to race discrimination, one-third was based on sex discrimination (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.). Focusing on sex discrimination, guidelines were issued in 1965 and expanded in 1966, 1968, and 1972 (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.). Job selection could not be based on gender preferences or stereotypes, jobs could not be categorized as male or female, and it

was deemed illegal not to hire or promote women because they were married or had children. It would later (1978) become illegal to discriminate against women because they were pregnant. With these changes, women could only be treated in a manner consistent with the way a man would be treated—policies for women could not differ from men.

By 1970, the number of discrimination claims filed with the EEOC had more than doubled (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.). Congressional hearings held in 1971 made it evident that, despite the law, discrimination was widespread—both among ethnic minorities and for women—and the discrimination was manifest in various forms. Women in jobs in certain fields and in lowest paid positions were prevalent. Based on these findings, Congress passed the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, which gave the EEOC litigation authority to sue employers, unions, and employment agencies on the basis of discrimination. Under the Act, Title VII was expanded to include federal, state, and local governments as well as K-12 and higher education institutions, and the number of employees needed for Title VII protection was reduced to 15. These changes opened the floodgates for discrimination charges, and by 1977, there was a backlog of nearly 95,000 unresolved cases (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.).

**Affirmative action in higher education.** The women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s also focused attention on the gender inequities in education. In the late sixties, Bernice Sandler, who was then Chair of the Action Committee for Federal Compliance, joined forces with the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) in an attempt to call attention to higher education's failure to comply with EO 11375 (Glazer-Raymo, 1999).



In January 1970, WEAL filed the first class-action sex discrimination lawsuit against 250 colleges and universities and demanded that the Department of Labor investigate those institutions receiving federal funding. Congressional hearings were held in the summer of 1970 under the auspices of a higher education subcommittee chaired by Representative Edith Green at which over 1,200 pages of testimony of discrimination against women in higher education were presented. As a result, Title VII, as well as the Equal Pay Act, was extended to public and private education institutions requiring goals and timetables for the admission, hiring, tenure, and promotion of women and minorities. In 1972, the Department of Labor sent letters describing these guidelines to 2,500 college and universities receiving federal contracts.

More importantly, Title IX also grew out of these hearings and the associated disclosure of rampant discrimination in higher education. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 was established and states that “no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance” (United States Department of Labor, n.d., Section 1681 (a)). This amendment included federal, state, and local governments in addition to K-12 schools, colleges, and universities. Examples of discrimination banned under Title IX include employment opportunities, sexual harassment, and differences in opportunities in schools' academic or athletic programs as well as the prohibition of retaliation for filing a complaint or advocating for the protection assumed under Title IX. The U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) was given responsibility for the oversight of Title IX but took until 1974 to publish final regulations. According to Glazer-Raymo

(1999), action on Title IX was delayed due to opponents' claims that it would result in reverse discrimination, and three years after its inception, President Ford signed the regulations into law.

Though not targeted at college and university athletics, Title IX had a dramatic impact on college sports for women (Glazer-Raymo, 2008). Prior to Title IX, there were no collegiate sports or athletic scholarships for women, although the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) had oversight of women's collegiate participation in sports. With the passage of Title IX, equal treatment and opportunity for men's and women's sports became the law. Up to that time, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) oversaw only men's sports and had no interest in women's athletic participation (Carpenter & Acosta, 2001). Given the requirements of Title IX, it was clear that women's sports were here to stay, but the NCAA, according to Paul (2001), intended to take over the AIAW and "silence the voices of the female sports leaders" (Paul, 2001, p. 216). Title IX caused the merging of men's and women's sports in some colleges and universities. According to Carpenter and Acosta (2001), the male directors retained their positions, while the women directors were left either jobless or second-in-command. So, while Title IX had tremendous positive outcomes for female athletes, it all but disintegrated the presence of female athletic directors, removing females from these leadership positions and leaving female athletes without this important role model.

By 1973, nearly half of the campus-based complaints filed with the EEOC involved claims of sex discrimination (Glazer-Raymo, 1999). College and university presidents charged with meeting the goals of affirmative action responded by appointing affirmative action officers, establishing women's commissions, and focusing on human

resource issues such as recruitment and hiring policies, promotion and tenure policies, and staff development. Affirmative action, as seen by supporters, was a means to rectify disadvantages and the discrimination faced by women and minorities as well as a method to increase cultural diversity on campuses. Opponents, however, viewed it as preferential treatment for women and minorities and as resulting in reverse discrimination. The focus on women and minorities in this manner was also viewed as reinforcing the stereotype of their inferiority. Women's commission reports reflect common themes and conditions including the need for a culture supportive of women's work at all levels, salary inequities by gender, male-dominated departments, male-dominated leadership, and the need to modify tenure policies and provide for childcare (Glazer-Raymo, 1999).

Glazer-Raymo (1999) described the impact of the commissions as two-fold in their approaches to problem-solving. While they created the image of a means to assume and resolve issues in a democratic fashion, they were still subject to the agendas of college and university presidents, while, in contrast, they could still operate outside of the established governance and political systems within institutions. According to Glazer-Raymo, despite the work of the commissions and the importance of their work, "the institutional culture of most universities is not compatible with the needs and concerns of women in academe" (1999, p. 187). According to Rai and Critzer (2000), attitudes toward affirmative action have changed in more recent times, as there is a reluctance to endorse quota systems or to give preferential treatment because someone is a woman or a minority or both. Claims about affirmative action have labeled it as a condition that pits groups against one another without eliminating discrimination. Women and minorities who have succeeded are viewed as having done so because of affirmative action and not

due to their abilities or skills. The nineties saw the beginnings of a backlash toward affirmative action with states repealing its laws and mandates.

### **Current Conditions for Women in Higher Education**

Today's higher education landscape reflects a much more diverse student body and a somewhat more varied population of faculty, staff, and administrators. The surge in the presence of women in higher education is obvious in both the numbers of women attending college and the positions held by women among faculty and administrators on our campuses (Touchton, et al., 2008). In fact, research has demonstrated that women have outnumbered men with regard to college enrollment and degree attainment to the extent that the gender gap as commonly used now also refers to the underrepresentation of males on our college campuses (King, 2006). Women have earned the majority of bachelor's degrees since 1990, and as recently as 2004, women were the majority of graduate students maintaining 58 percent of enrollments (as cited in King, 2006). The presence of full-time female faculty has increased from 19% in 1970 to 41% in 2005 (as cited in Touchton et al., 2008), forty-five percent of our senior administrators are women, and the number of female presidents has more than doubled in the past 20 years (King & Gomez, 2008).

While all of these measures sound promising, when the numbers are examined more closely, a different kind of picture unfolds. With regard to college enrollment and degree attainment, the increase in female enrollment does not come at the expense of males, as the rise reflects increased enrollments by low-income Whites and low- and middle-income Hispanic students and not decreased attainment by males (King, 2006). At the graduate level, the female majority is linked to the predominance of women in

education, nursing, social work, and allied health at the master's level (King, 2006).

While 41% of our faculty members are women, only 24% of full professors are women, and only 19% of them held this rank at doctoral level institutions (as cited in Touchton et al., 2008). With regard to our senior level administrators, only 23% of college and university presidents are women, and only 34% of senior positions at doctoral institutions are held by women. So, like the past, gender disparities persist with regard to gender differences in roles and opportunities, and these differences continue to work to the disadvantage of women. Clearly, women have made gains in higher education, but differences linger on.

**Differences by gender.** Differences are still present such that men hold the majority of leadership positions and dominate in more prestigious roles and institutions. According to a study by Catalyst (2011, March), among higher education institutions in 2006, women held only 23% of presidential appointments at all colleges and universities, with 26.6% of all appointments at public and 18.7% of those at private institutions. Women were reported to hold 45% of senior administrative positions, but these figures change substantially when identified by institution type (King & Gomez, 2008). Fifty-five percent of chiefs of staff and chief diversity officers were women, while 38% were chief academic officers, 36% deans, and 31% executive vice presidents (King & Gomez, 2008). Women held more lower-level faculty positions and fewer tenured positions than men at doctoral, master's, and bachelor's institutions. While the majority of tenured faculty is male, the majority of non-tenure track positions are held by women, and Curtis (2011) found that the percentage of non-tenure track faculty positions has increased over the years, and the percentage of women in these roles has remained steadily greater than

men's.

In 2005, women made up 41% of all full-time faculty members at all ranks (Touchton et al., 2008). When taking rank into consideration, there were vast differences with women as the majority of all instructors at 53%, 46% of assistant professors, 39% of associate professors, while only 25% of all full professors were female. When taking tenure status into consideration, more women were in non-tenured positions (52%), and fewer women held tenure-track (41%), and tenured (26%) positions at doctoral institutions. Based on these percentages, most female faculty are in non-tenure-track positions leading to nowhere and are paid accordingly (West & Curtis, 2006). According to West and Curtis (2006), if the number of women in tenure-track positions were in proportion to doctoral degrees earned, women would hold many more positions than they currently do. In this regard, West and Curtis see promotion to full professor as another obstacle for women in higher education. Women faculty members were better represented at two-year institutions with 53% in non-tenured and tenure-track levels, and 47% in tenured faculty positions. Additionally, across institution types, women faculty were better represented at two-year institutions at 51%, with the totals gradually declining based on institution level with 42% at baccalaureate and master's institutions, and 34% at doctoral level colleges and universities.

According to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), women pursuing faculty positions in higher education face more obstacles than those who seek managerial and director positions in corporate America (as cited in West & Curtis, 2006). The underrepresentation of women faculty impacts all mechanisms of the process involved with gaining a full-time, tenured position, ranging from the nature and scope of

academic research to the requirements set forth to gain tenure. The dominance of men in the profession makes it difficult to modify these requirements to enable women to join the ranks.

As represented in the numbers above, Marschke, Laursen, Nielsen and Rankin (2007) stated that the likelihood of a woman's presence at an institution decreases as the prestige of the institution increases. While change has occurred, women are still underrepresented in leadership roles, and more changes are needed in order for that to happen. Isolating faculty as a group, Marschke et al. (2007) discuss the likelihood of change relative to hiring, termination, and promotion. They claim that the domination of males among faculty is likely to change very slowly due to demographics including their age in relation to retirement, the preponderance of males in certain disciplines, faculty attrition, and the availability of new faculty positions. Described as demographic inertia, unless certain practices change with regard to faculty hiring, the demographics of the faculty will be slow to change. Specifically, Marschke et al. addressed the evaluation of faculty exits, new hires, the pool of possible Ph.D. candidates, and promotion rates. In their study aimed at exploring ways to achieve gender parity among faculty whereby the presence of women faculty among disciplines would be representative of their presence among the various Ph.D. pools, the authors developed several scenarios by manipulating certain of these practices to project the outcomes.

Study results when evaluating the varying practices determined that, if nothing were to change, women would never reach equal representation among disciplines. A second case addressed the retention of female faculty. If fewer women left the profession, women would achieve parity in 43 years. A third case involved equality in hiring and

required that fifty percent of new hires be women. If this change were made, women would reach parity in 28 years. If both hiring and retention were addressed, parity would be reached in 20 years. Beyond these predictions, a number of practices were identified that offer advantage to men while disadvantaging women. These include gender-biased performance evaluations, student-biased instructor evaluations, tenure demands, mentoring and networking opportunities, and the devaluation of certain disciplines. Marschke et al. (2007) make these points simply to stress that practices must change with regard to hiring and retention of faculty members, or parity for women will never be reached.

Billard (1994) had an interest in exploring the status of women in higher education in the twenty years that followed the passage of Title IX. Her findings are bleak. With regard to promotion and tenure of faculty, it was determined that despite women and men having equivalent credentials at the beginning of their careers, women fell behind in both their rank and tenure status, and salary gaps grew with years of experience. Billard also dispels myths supporting the devalued position of women and relating to the likelihood that women teach more than conduct research, that women are constrained by childcare obligations, and that single women will have greater success than married women. In so doing, Billard points to evidence that those whose primary responsibility it is to teach are more likely to receive tenure and that married women with children are more likely to be promoted. Given these facts, since more women spend their time teaching as opposed to conducting research, why are more women not tenured? If childcare obligations are not a hindrance, why are so few such women promoted? Billard's "inevitable conclusion" (p. 16) is that women's work is simply devalued and



considered to be of a lesser quality than men's.

**Salary inequities.** Salary differences by gender are present not only in corporate America but in higher education as well. The CONSAD Research Corporation completed a study for the U.S. Department of Labor and identified six factors which contribute to what has been labeled a gender wage gap (CONSAD Research Corporation, 2009).

Women typically earn less than men, and the gender wage gap refers to the difference between what men and women earn. According to the study, one's occupation is the greatest contributing factor to this gap due to the fact that women are disproportionately clustered in occupations that pay less. Human capital, work experience, career interruptions, motherhood, women as part-time workers, and industry are additional factors segregating workers by gender and resulting in lower pay levels for women.

CONSAD's review of data from the Bureau of Labor statistics shows that the median earnings of women relative to those of men have risen from 62.3% in 1979 to 80.2% in 2007. When controlling for variables such as education level and work experience, an unaccounted for wage gap ranging from 4.8% to 7.1% is still present. How much of the wage gaps can be directly attributed to these factors and how much results from discrimination, according to the study, is not clear. The report concludes with this statement:

The complex combination of factors that collectively determine the wages paid to different individuals makes the formulation of policy that will reliably redress any overt discrimination that does exist a task that is, at least, daunting, and, more likely, unachievable. (CONSAD Research Corporation, 2009, p. 36).

A consistent wage gap ranging from 6% to 8% between men and women in both

the labor market in general as well as in academe specifically has surfaced in most empirical studies (Toutkoushian, Bellas, & Moore, 2007, p. 574). Toutkoushian, Bellas, and Moore (2007) describes reasons for this gap, and in academe in particular, it is offered that “a wage penalty is associated with being female in academe” (p. 574). Pfeffer and Davis-Blake (1987) determined that an increase in the percentage of women administrators had a negative effect on the salaries of both men and women. Reasons for the unexplained gap vary and have ranged from the choices that women make along with their investment in human capital to women not needing as much income as men, since men are typically considered to be the primary breadwinners (Toutkoushian et al., 2007). Jacobs (1996), however, points out that by 1990, women had reached parity with men in terms of educational attainment and that human capital differences are no longer relevant. Despite gains, women's earnings lag behind men's. Toutkoushian et al. (2007) also include other possible explanations such as cultural beliefs relative to what are considered to be appropriate roles for men and women combined with the possibility of differences resulting from salary based on merit at higher administrative levels which are subjective in nature (as cited in Toutkoushian et al., 2007). Similar differences were found in faculty salaries based on a study using survey data from five national surveys of college faculty between 1969 and 1989 revealing that the gender gap in earnings remained across all colleges and universities (Ashraf, 1996). Isolating the components of this gap that are directly attributed to discrimination shows a difference of 14% in 1969 which improved to a difference of 8% in 1984. However, the difference in 1989 was greater than the difference twenty years earlier. More recent data at the national level demonstrates that while women earned 96 percent of men's salaries in 2005-06 at two-year schools, they

earned only 78 percent of men's salaries at doctoral universities. This overall difference is explained predominantly by the fact that women are more likely to be employed at institutions that pay less and also because they are less likely to hold senior level rank. However, there still exists an “unexplained” salary difference when institutional and individual characteristics are controlled for (West, 2006).

Using the Chronicle of Higher Education salary survey, Monks and McGoldrick (2004) evaluated the earnings of the five highest paid positions at private colleges from 1998 through 2001. The majority of these positions were at the vice president level but also included other positions such as president, provost, program director, and dean. Most responses were representative of master's and liberal arts institutions with fewer from research and doctoral colleges and universities. Findings indicate that women are underrepresented (20%) among these highest levels of administration and in particular at research and doctoral institutions where their representation is at two percent. Overall, women earn less than men in each job category and at each type of institution, and women are employed at institutions where enrollment and faculty salaries are lower.

A gender pay gap was present between males and females with male administrators earning between 13 to 18 percent more than women and receiving between 11 and 17 percent more in benefits than women. When controlled for institution size and average faculty salary, the pay gap was reduced to between 3 and 4 percent. The salaries of administrators may be more difficult to gauge according to Williams (1989), as comparable jobs may vary from institution to institution, and perks that have been added cannot necessarily be measured. At the highest administrative level, however, it was determined that female presidents, comprising 18% of the sample, earned five percent

less than their male counterparts at master's level schools and three percent more at liberal arts schools.

Wage gaps persist in higher education and, like the past, women are overrepresented in the lowest-paid positions and in the lowest levels of levels of academe (Bousquet, November 2, 2012). Contingent women faculty in the lowest paying positions outnumber tenured males two-to-one within the highest paying doctoral institutions. At two-year schools where the number of women is considerably higher, they are still among the lowest paid. The same is true across disciplines. Even in 2012, it was noted, “Generally speaking, if a field pays someone with a doctorate less than a bartender, there’s going to be a bunch of women in that discipline” (Bousquet, 2012, p. B19).

**Culture and climate.** While the population of women on our campuses has grown, according to Holmgren, the institution itself continues to be a male-centered entity, where women are expected to learn to do the work the man’s way (Holmgren, 2000). Gender inequality exists in the workplace and is a result of norms that have become embedded into the organizational structure and culture (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Climate studies have indicated that, within higher education, women’s perceptions reflect a sexist, disrespectful, non-supportive, and intolerant environment (Bilimoria, Joy, et al., 2008). This way of being is supported by organizational culture, which can be described as

...a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaption and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (as cited in

Hoff, 1999, p. 326)

For many years, women have played a significant role in the development and administration of higher education. Schwartz (1997) credits women with the success of coeducation and describes women as the creators of initial research on students, student cultures, and the value of higher education. He continues, however, by indicating that the history and culture of higher education have been interpreted in ways that ignore many of the contributions of women. Schwartz concludes by saying that, despite the work and contributions of women, “men were and are preeminent” (Schwartz, 1997, p. 519). These attitudinal barriers may very well be keeping women from assuming more powerful positions within our institutions (Schein, 1995). Often referred to as “the boys’ club,” the perception exists that men in senior positions tend to regard women as inferior to their male colleagues (McCall, Liddell, O’Neil, & Coman, 2000). The practice of keeping women out of senior administrative roles combined with the practice of hiring only individuals with prior experience prevents women from having the opportunity to join these ranks. Furthermore, it is suggested that women enter their positions with an awareness of their differences and that, regardless, they will be viewed as representative (or tokens) of their kind (Kaplan & Helly, 1984).

Thomas, Bierema, and Landau (2004) describe higher education as an environment that is traditionally patriarchal and has offered only limited access for women leaders and administrators. They describe women to be at a disadvantage in higher education due to the patriarchal culture and resulting lack of provision for or development of women in leadership roles. Women are pocketed into certain types of functions that are considered to be “female” roles and are present primarily in lower

ranks of faculty and administrative positions. Thomas et al. (2004) contend that the prominence of men in higher level and managerial roles decreases opportunities for women, resulting in fewer career and advancement opportunities.

In terms of higher education administration, marginalization is also manifested by the greater presence of women in positions of authority but with little power, such as directors of student life, financial aid, or alumni affairs. In such positions and others, the reality is described in terms of a presence or a voice: “Today, individuals may be present, but silent; visible, but not heard; at the table but not empowered to make meaningful decisions” (Chun & Evans, 2008, p. 32). Even when present, women sometimes must tread lightly in order not to be perceived as an outcast or a troublemaker. Female administrators must respond carefully and facilitate without arousing resistance (Kaplan & Helly, 1984). Working in an uncomfortable setting may result in a female yielding to her male counterparts, while some women who are successful are described as having done so by becoming “honorary men” (Walton, 1996, p. 15). Women’s career studies in academe have indicated that women are at a disadvantage due to the “hidden curriculum” that teaches them how to assimilate in a male-dominated culture and repress their female identities in order to succeed in such a climate (Thomas, Bierema, & Landau, 2004). It is a male-biased workplace that invisibly but surely determines power and habit and keeps women “in their place,” which is to say, subordinate to men (Thomas et al., 2004). This unfriendly climate is adequately described by a female in higher education: “However, I have also faced challenges and suspicions from my colleagues and students about my place and intellect, struggled with self-doubt, and wrestled with my imposed outsider status and isolation” (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2008, p. 317).

Badjo and Dickson (2001) have researched women's advancement in organizations as it relates to climate. Their findings indicate that a climate of gender equity, the degree to which the organization's members value and practice the inclusion of women, is the greatest predictor of women's advancement. They posit, however, that affirmative action will not necessarily change an organization's culture and warn against the possibility that a hostile climate may result from a forced inclusion of women. Lewis (2005) also discusses issues of climate within colleges and universities. Acknowledging that the numbers of women present on campuses have increased, and, if that is the measure of equality, we have made progress. But she contends that it is not so much the gender of the community as it is the climate that exists on campuses which continues to minimize what women have to offer. Lewis suggests that a repositioning of the institution within a broader context of power is what lies at the heart of the still present lessening of women's roles and voices. She suggests that such inhibitors as marginalization and exclusion have become manifest and states that women are excluded not because of gender but by the ideologies present on today's campuses.

As described by Bilimoria, Hopkins, and O'Neil (2008), organizational structures are generally not conducive to women's careers. The authors conclude that traditional and popular models of careers are still male-dominated in that the expectation of success in an organization is defined by a linear, upward series of steps. Not only do women's careers not unfold in this manner, but also, women do not necessarily define success on the same terms as men. It is stated that indicators such as a sense of achievement, integrity, and balance are part of women's definition for success. As long as career development continues to be defined in a hierarchical manner, women will continue to be

at a disadvantage.

When considering the varying degrees to which women are present in leadership roles and among faculty, a pipeline metaphor is often used (Mason, Stacy, Goudlen, Hoffman, & Frasch, 2005). While often used in the context of faculty, it also applies to women in general relative to their quest for managerial and leadership roles (as cited in Bilimoria, Joy, & Lang, 2008). The notion of a pipeline represents not only the current number of women who are available to enter a profession but also the paths of these women relative to conditions that would cause them to leave the profession as they face obstacles along the way. A "leaky pipeline" (as cited in Bilimoria, Joy, & Lang, 2008, p. 425) is illustrative of the departure of women at certain points in their careers. The impacts of these departures are reflected in the scarcity of women who are present and available for more senior roles requiring certain levels of education and experience. For faculty, the pipeline reflects the notion that as women become recipients of an equal share of doctoral degrees, their presence among faculty would become representative of the pool of qualified faculty. This, however, has not materialized (White, 2005). While the pipeline may initially be full, women may drop out or be pushed out for any number of reasons ranging from family responsibilities to the failure of institutions to identify and promote qualified females.

As described by Mason, Stacy, Goudlen, Hoffman, and Frasch (2005), reasons for the leaks include the failure of women to be promoted despite their equal representation among qualified applicant pools. For faculty, the pressures and inflexibility of the tenure clock coupled with the demands outside of work that often fall more heavily on women than men, such as child and elder care and household duties, contribute to the leaks.



Research also shows that women elect to leave the profession and perceive that the academic environment, limitations on mobility, and parenting negatively impact their choices when considering an academic career (van Anders, 2004). Pipeline initiatives such as mentoring, coaching, and professional development, climate initiatives aimed at creating environments of inclusion, and new or modified policies around hiring, leaves, and work/life integration have been put in place as a means of supporting the inclusion of women (as cited in Bilimoria, Joy, & Lang, 2008).

To further investigate the experiences of women in higher education, Allan (2003) reviewed and evaluated Women's Commission Reports between the years of 1971 and 1996 from four major public universities. While the purpose of such reports was to promote gender equality and provide a voice for women (as cited in Allan, 2003), Allan contends that such reports also served to undermine women in higher education. Throughout the reports, women are depicted as distressed and dependent which reinforces sexism and the domination of males. Focusing on women as victims puts them in a vulnerable subjective position and undermines the notion of equality by implying that they are dependent on men. The reports also described how women are underrepresented, and making access an issue only reinforces that they are outsiders. Allan described that creating a focus on such things as lack of qualifications implies that the problem lies with the women themselves and is not a result of the functioning of the organization. Opportunities for administrative or faculty training and development are often not offered to women at lower levels who would not otherwise have access to such support, yet need it in order to advance in their careers.

Similarly, a study conducted at Johns Hopkins University identified four themes

describing the status of women at the university (Dominici, et al., 2009). The first was that fewer women were promoted and thus their opportunities for leadership roles were reduced more so than men. Secondly, the culture of the institution was such that leaders were expected to be available at all times regardless of outside obligations. This proposition is unattractive to women who often have family obligations for which no one is available to take their place. The women felt that this limitation favored men, many of whom had wives who did not work outside of the home. Leadership style was a third concern, as women recognized the preference for a transactional, hierarchical style within the university which was inconsistent with their preferred ways of leading. Finally, women in leadership roles expressed their concern that female leaders at the university were not recognized to the extent that male leaders were and that they were respected less than their male counterparts. Exclusion from informal networks left them marginalized, while such networks worked to the advantage of men.

### **Stereotyping and Discrimination in Higher Education**

Madden (2005) suggests that, like women in business and other industries, women in higher education administration are no less likely to become subject to discrimination based on stereotypes, and those who identify as feminists are more likely so. In an attempt to counter stereotypes, women are encouraged to develop expertise in areas such as finance, research, and strategic planning. Again, female minorities are described as encountering multiple stereotypes and as a result may be less likely than White women to seek higher level positions (as cited in Madden, 2005). Madden suggests that the traditionally masculine culture of higher education lends itself to the assumption that effective leadership is equated with power, status, and autocracy. In order to

minimize threat, Madden encourages women to align their leadership values with the mission of the institution or with its traditions and to identify allies along the way.

**Stereotyping in higher education.** Most of the research on stereotyping in higher education involves the framing of faculty roles based on gender. Basow and Silberg (1987) explain that teaching at the college level is a male gender-typed profession, and this stereotype contributes to the devaluation of women. A study by Harris (1976) involved having students rate teachers based on written descriptions of them. The descriptions included either feminine or masculine traits, and names were assigned to each, again either masculine or feminine. Findings concluded that teachers described with masculine traits were rated more positively on six of the seven traits that were explored. When viewed across four institutional levels, nursery school, elementary school, high school, and college, masculine traits in teachers were favored over feminine traits at all levels. As hypothesized, teachers with masculine traits were rated as far more competent than teachers with feminine traits, while those with feminine traits were rated as warmer than those with masculine descriptions. Significant effects were also found such that teachers with masculine descriptions were described as harder working, more intelligent, and more likely to be referred to as a superior teacher. However, teachers with male descriptions were viewed as superior by male students, while teachers with feminine descriptions were seen as superior by female students indicating, according to Harris (1976), that individuals value the stereotypes associated with their sex. Additionally, the sex of the teacher was not a factor—only the traits and not the gender of the teacher—indicating it is feminine traits and not necessarily one's gender that is devalued. Harris concludes by suggesting that discrimination against women may exist based on the

expectation that they will possess feminine traits which are then devalued.

Similar findings resulted from a study in which faculty were rated by other faculty (Wiley & Crittenden, 1992). In this study, tenured male associate professors were given written accounts of publication successes and failures of fictitious female and male junior faculty and were asked to respond to a questionnaire of their impressions of the individuals. Specifically, they were asked to identify traits they perceived of the junior faculty member, the degree to which their work was sufficient for tenure, and how likeable they would find that person as a colleague. The traits specified in the survey were further grouped into the categories of success orientation, professionalism, masculinity, and femininity. Survey results revealed that junior faculty whose publications were accepted were rated higher in desirability as a colleague and professionalism and lower in femininity. Female junior faculty were rated as more feminine but less professional than male junior faculty. Regardless of the junior faculty's gender, when the reasons for success were self-serving, the professional rating was higher. When the reasons for success were modest, the femininity rating was higher, while the professionalism rating was lower. Wiley and Crittenden (1992) discuss the implications of these findings for women and notes the detrimental association of being identified as less feminine with success in publishing. Furthermore, if a woman behaves with modesty in a manner consistent with her gender role, she is perceived as less professional. With publication being on the critical path to tenure, Wiley and Crittenden contend that women are forced to choose between their professional identity and their gender identity and must risk losing one to serve the other. A woman's gender role, in essence, makes her less credible as an academic.

In addition to gender stereotypes, evidence of the double standard for women was revealed in Bennett's (1982) study of student perceptions of faculty. Consistent with gender stereotypes, this study of student perceptions and expectations of female and male instructors yielded evidence that female faculty are judged to be warmer and more supportive and less authoritarian than male faculty regardless of the gender of the student. Female faculty members were also identified as more charismatic and potent than male faculty which is contrary to the female stereotype. According to Bennett, and, again, consistent with stereotypes, when an exception to the rule is present, and in this case, a female academic, the behavior becomes highly visible and gains greater attention. Likewise, women in male-dominated departments were rated significantly higher than the men in those departments as well as women in other departments. A double standard was also present in that while students received greater time and support from their female instructors, they also held women to a greater standard of accessibility. Basow (1998) also found evidence of a double standard in that female faculty members need to be competent and confident as well as warm and friendly in order to meet student expectations. While female faculty members were subject to this double standard, males were not.

There is evidence that no differences based on gender were detected for female and male faculty. In research conducted by Constantinople, Cornelius, and Gray (1988) which explored gender differences in the classroom, no evidence was found of differences between female and male professors in their classroom regarding their behavior as instructors. Feldman (1992, 1993) analyzed a series of studies conducted both in a laboratory setting and of actual student evaluations and in both settings found no

significant differences of faculty ratings based on gender. In some of the laboratory studies (Feldman, 1992), males did receive higher overall ratings than female instructors, and female faculty's evaluations were sometimes colored by gender-related attributes. In the majority of the student evaluation studies, there was a slight preference for female instructors who were rated more positively than male instructors (Feldman, 1993).

Reflecting gender stereotypes, female faculty realized advantages due to the attributes of warmth and kindness associated with women. Crawford and MacLeod's (1990) study showed that female faculty were more effective at making their students feel known and their participation valued. Additionally, women faculty created a classroom climate more conducive to student participation. Female faculty were much more likely to encourage participation than male faculty, and there was evidence that male faculty did not value student participation.

Basow (1995) contends that while much research concludes that no gender effects are present in student evaluations of their professors, if faculty gender is evaluated along with other variables, particularly student gender, gender typing of the discipline, gender-typing of the professor, and status of the professor, differences become apparent. In a study of over 5,000 student evaluations over a four-year period, Basow (1995) found significant differences in teacher evaluation when examining professor and student gender and professor gender and discipline. Specifically, findings indicated that both female and male students rated male faculty members similarly, while ratings for females varied based on student gender and discipline. Differences in female faculty members' ratings included appropriate speech, for which female faculty members were rated highest by female students and lowest by male students. Female faculty members were

also rated more favorably for sensitivity, student comfort, and respect, particularly by female students.

Male students, on the other hand, rated female faculty members lowest on fairness, thought stimulation, non-repetition, and overall effectiveness. Male faculty members were rated higher for knowledge, and females were rated higher for respect and sensitivity. According to Basow (1995), these findings reflect not only gender preferences but also gender stereotypes, and tendencies to favor females who are comforting and sensitive, for example, are consistent with gendered expectations. Nonconformity with gendered stereotypes is subject to disapproval as displayed by male students' lower ratings of female faculty members. When reviewed by discipline, male faculty in the social sciences were rated higher than females for enthusiasm, thought stimulation, feedback, knowledge, and overall satisfaction. In the humanities, female faculty members were rated higher for feedback and appropriate speech, especially by female students. In the natural sciences, while there was no interaction between faculty and student gender, male faculty were rated highest in knowledge. Basow (1995) points out, though, the very low number of female faculty in this division.

Basow (1995) contends that these findings, and particularly the overall teacher rating, are important because student evaluations are often used in personnel and promotion decisions. Since gender comes into play with regard to student evaluations, Basow (1995) recommends that those using the evaluations to make personnel decisions have a thorough understanding of how gender can modify the results. Park (1996) also argues for the disadvantaged position of women when their work is evaluated for tenure and promotion. Differences are evident in that men devote more time to research and

women to teaching and service. The emphasis on research situates female faculty to be devalued based on the work they do. Park refers to a gendered division of labor in which men's work is valued and women's work is not. Promotion and tenure decisions are heavily influenced by a faculty member's research and not so much by their teaching and service, and these distinctions are present at all types of institutions except two-year colleges. Excellent and abundant research will result in tenure, despite little participation in teaching and service, while the opposite is not true. Park adds that "to the degree that scholarship is 'tainted' by its affiliation with teaching or service-related activities, it is devalued" (1996, p. 49). This focus on research is a source of stress for female faculty who find themselves overcommitted to teaching and service—work that will not support their promotion.

**Discrimination in higher education.** The types and impacts of gender stereotyping described above can result in discrimination against women in higher education settings. While overt discrimination is less likely to occur, subtle discrimination has taken its place, and stereotyping is one manifestation of subtle discrimination (Basow, 1998). Benokraitis (1998) distinguishes among different levels of discrimination. The first is blatant, taking the form of sexual harassment as an example, and very obvious. The second is subtle discrimination, which is less apparent, and the third is covert discrimination and can take the form of sabotage as an example. In defining subtle discrimination, this form of discrimination

...refers to the unequal and harmful treatment of women that is typically less visible and less obvious than blatant sex discrimination is. It is often not noticed because most people have internalized subtle sexist behavior as normal, natural,



or acceptable...what is discrimination to many women may not seem discriminatory to many men (or even other women). Thus, when women notice or comment about subtle sexist behavior, they may be chided for being "too sensitive" or "petty." (Benokraitis, 1998, p. 5)

Benokraitis (1998) further distinguishes levels of subtle sex discrimination, namely individual, organizational, institutional, and cultural, and describes how these levels overlap to the extent that women can face multiple layers of discrimination based on factors beyond their sex, with race or ethnicity being prime examples. In higher education, Benokraitis describes individual sex discrimination as the ways in which individuals can be treated differently to their disadvantage. Challenging or questioning the authority of female faculty when the same isn't the case for males, referring to women as "Ms." instead of "Dr.", and examples of women receiving lesser institutional resources than men are examples of individual subtle discrimination. Ways in which the organization enacts subtle sex discrimination are reflected in practices of gatekeeping and mentoring, where certain groups can be excluded based on common institutional practices. With regard to institutional sex discrimination, Benokraitis proposes that many regulations, policies, and practices were established during the period that preceded anti-discriminatory laws, yet these elements remain entrenched in the institution. Gender bias in textbooks and course content, as well as differences between the sexes with regard to academic pursuits, serve as examples of this level of subtle discrimination. Cultural sex discrimination is seen in higher education by focusing on "exceptional examples" as tokenisms of support and by differences that are present in the funding of women's and men's athletic teams.

To understand the consequences of discrimination in hiring, Konrad and Pfeffer's (1991) research sheds light on the ways in which the combination of discrimination and stereotyping restrict opportunities for female higher education administrators. Their findings were that women and minorities were more likely to be hired for a position when the previous employee was either female or a minority. Having a previous woman in the position doubled the likelihood that a woman would be hired, and having a minority in the position tripled the likelihood that a minority would be hired. Women were significantly more likely to be hired when the occupation was comprised mostly of women, when the organization had a higher percentage of female employees, and when the previous hire had been female. As concluded by the authors, a pattern of segregation was maintained with regard to the hiring of administrators, and positions that excluded females and minorities in the past continued to exclude them. Other findings included that women were less likely to be hired for high-paying positions and more likely to be hired from within. Type of institution influenced the hiring of minorities, as they were more likely to be hired at public institutions, and women were more likely to be hired into traditional male positions when the job was low-paying, when the job was at a public school, and when there were already many female administrators at the institution.

Likewise, Kulis (1997) found differences by gender when evaluating gender segregation in a national survey of colleges and universities. He determined that significant differences were present in the kinds of jobs that women and men held at these institutions. More women were present in clerical or non faculty positions, while the largest representation of men was found among top administrative staff and tenured faculty. According to Kulis, women's representation in higher education is inversely

related to the status or authority of a position. He also found, however, that a positive relationship exists between the presence of women at top levels of administration and their presence among faculty jobs. Discouragingly, if males dominate as faculty, the positive effects of this relationship may not be observed. As a contributor to this condition, Kulis cites institutional discrimination, both direct and indirect, used as a means for dominant groups to maintain their positions of power and authority.

A contemporary form of discrimination aimed at the attack of feminism has been identified and is described by Clark, Garner, Higonnet, and Katrak (1996). Labeled "antifeminist harassment," (Clark, Garner, Higonnet, & Katrak, 1996, p. x), it represents the devaluation of and attack against women and feminists whose work is aimed at promoting feminist theory or regards the promotion of research, scholarship, and teaching pertaining to women or gender inequities. This type of harassment can take the form of threatening or intimidating behaviors in classrooms, meetings, and job interviews but can also be as extreme as physical threat or violence enacted toward women as a result of their position in support of feminist views. Resistance has also taken shape in the form of attacks against women's studies programs, the refusal of senior faculty to participate on dissertation committees, and the failure to recognize or promote women's studies or gender inequality lectures or courses at the same level as those "taught by a White male" (Kolodny, 1996, p. 4).

Two remarkable examples of antifeminist harassment are a School of Nursing which was forced to protect its labs from desecration when awarded a research grant to study women's health issues (Clark et al., 1996). A second example provided by Sandler (1993) as an example of the chilly climate for women describes the desecration of posters

at Harvard University publicizing a talk, "The 'F' Word: To Be or Not to Be a Feminist." The word "feminist" was crossed out and replaced with "Fucked." Additionally, a survey of female faculty brought to light disturbing results that included physical violence and sexual harassment (Grauerholz, 1989). The survey revealed that almost half of the women had experienced sexist-related behaviors from students ranging from sexual comments or jokes to sexual bribery and assault. For the half of women who experienced these behaviors from students, nearly 60% experienced two or more of these types of behaviors from students. The most common behavior was sexist comments followed by lack of attention, obscene phone calls, and verbal sexual comments. Other violations included defacing professors' property and the shouting of obscenities at them. Interestingly, only one-fourth of the professors considered this range of behaviors to constitute sexual harassment. While nearly all of them considered sexual assault to be harassment, less than half of them considered sexual comments to be harassment. A reason cited for this difference is the belief of some of the respondents that a student has no power over a professor, and so the behaviors do not constitute harassment. Considering what the professor believes to be the student's intent also colors her perception of whether the behavior constitutes harassment.

While this behavior toward female faculty was primarily enacted by male students (82%), seventeen percent of the women reported that both male and female students engaged in such behavior. In terms of response to the student, 58% of the female faculty reported doing nothing, considering the behavior not to be serious enough. Thirty-nine percent of women approached the student directly, 33% avoided the student altogether, and only 2% filed a formal complaint with the university. Overall, only 45% of faculty

indicated that these coping mechanisms were effective. The authors conclude that the significance of this study is two-fold. First, it provides evidence that contra-power harassment does take place. Secondly, it underscores the notion that gender in the workplace is salient, and that women, despite their clear position of authority as university faculty, are perceived and treated based first on their gender.

Unfortunately, women are hesitant to file claims of discrimination (as cited in Leslie & Gelfand, 2008). More dramatically, Liss' (1975) study of discrimination against women provided evidence that despite the fact that women were clearly discriminated against with regard to salary and faculty rank, they failed to even see or acknowledge the discrimination. In Liss' study of gender discrimination at a college, women blamed themselves for suffering disadvantages in order not to upset the status quo. In the words of the author,

...it seem[ed] safer to agree with the dominant values of the institution...and to defer their [own] aspirations....In a climate in which even when you win, you lose, it would be irrational for women to trust the system to hear and respond to their complaints...(Liss, 1975, pp. 220-221)

and women who did speak out jeopardized their careers. Reasons for silence around issues of discrimination include the likelihood of their being viewed as trouble-makers, fear of retaliation or exclusion in the workplace, negative performance evaluations, and increased workload and outcomes (Leslie & Gelfand, 2008). Secondary impacts can include those relative to organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Though the filing of complaints seldom results in corrective action, Leslie and Gelfand's (2008) research determined that women will file claims of discrimination if the cultural context

of the organization values and supports women but will not do so if the environment is one that devalues and excludes women. Incidents of gender-bias, stereotyping, and contra-power harassment have been documented at a male-dominated institution, the culture of which was described as "institutionalized bias" against women (Siskind & Kearns, 1997, p. 511). Thus, despite the presence of discrimination, women will fail to speak up if the culture is one that marginalizes women.

### **Women, Leadership, and Higher Education**

While it was reported in 2008 that women comprised 45% of all senior administrative positions, their presence in these roles varied noticeably based on institution type (King & Gomez, 2008). While women held 52% of senior leadership roles at two-year schools and 42% at baccalaureate institutions, they held only 38% of them at master's institutions and 34% at doctoral level institutions. Across all institution types, women were represented most often as chief human resources officer (70%), directors of continuing education (65%), directors of community services (60%), and chief diversity officer (55%). Women were less likely to hold chief academic officer roles (38%), deanships (36% excluding nursing and education), or executive vice president roles (31%). Deans of nursing and education were excluded from the King and Gomez (2008) study. While these positions are predominantly filled by women, they typically do not lead to the presidency and therefore were excluded.

Looking more closely at executive vice presidents, women held only 16% of these positions at doctoral institutions and 22% at baccalaureate institutions. Similarly, women served as chief academic officers at 23% of doctoral institutions and 34% at baccalaureate institutions. Since these positions are considered to be on the pathway to

the presidency (King & Gomez, 2008), our country's strongest institutions are not positioned to put women in significant leadership roles. When looking at our institutions' chief executive officers, women led 23 percent of institutions in 2006, an increase from 19 percent in 1998 and from 10 percent in 1986. These most recent increases, though, have been a result of women in these leading roles at public bachelor-degree-granting colleges, special focus institutions, and private two-year colleges (Touchton et al., 2008). Generally, women as presidents were more prevalent at two-year colleges (29%) and were to a much lesser extent present at doctoral institutions (14%) (as cited in Touchton et al., 2008). It will be interesting to see how these percentages change in the future, as it is expected that nearly half of current presidents will begin to retire, as they are now aged 61 and older (King & Gomez, 2008).

Very little racial and ethnic diversity is present among our institutions' leadership (King & Gomez, 2008). Only 16% of senior administrators and 10% of chief academic officers are non-White, and men of color are twice as likely as women of color to be chief academic officers. Women of color are sorely underrepresented among senior leaders at only 7 percent, while men of color are present at a rate of 9 percent. Twenty percent of executive vice presidents, chief student affairs officers, and enrollment management officers were people of color, while 82% of chief diversity officers were non-White. While the King and Gomez (2008) study revealed overall that the position of chief academic officer was the one most often leading to the presidency, White women, who hold 35% of these positions, are far better positioned to take that next step than are women of color who represent only 3% of CAO positions.

**Women as leaders in higher education.** Women leaders in higher education

often find themselves in a culture dominated by tradition and preconceived notions of leadership and leadership behavior (Twombly & Rosser, 2002). Cultural beliefs regarding women's roles can create roadblocks to their admission, acceptance, and mobility within the higher education setting. The "socialization or shaping of expectations" (Twombly & Rosser, 2002, p. 462) can predefine women's roles and limit their ability and opportunity to contribute in meaningful ways. Even for women who make it into leadership roles, a chilly climate awaits them and creates barriers to their success.

In the description of interviews conducted by Christman and McClellan (2008) was mentioned an intuitive recognition that programs and faculty support masculine behaviors. To manage themselves in their environment, the women "must balance between what is feminine and masculine behavior and never become too much one way or the other" (Christman & McClellan, 2008, p. 20). While the women described their leadership as moving from one gender norm to the other and also of fluid movement across them, they also noted the expectation that they should behave in a manner consistent with their gender role. As a result, according to the author, "women leaders find themselves fenced in by these expectations. They must slide around and over barbs in the wire because this is how we as a society have set up and identified the construction of gender" (Christman & McClellan, 2008, p. 22).

While women leaders are present in higher education, there is evidence that they have less power and authority than their male counterparts. A faculty study conducted by Denton and Zeytinoglu (1993) analyzed the perceived participation in decision-making of men and women in a university setting. As hypothesized, women did not perceive that they participated in decision-making on their campus, and this perception was consistent



across disciplines. Findings also revealed that perceived participation was related to being tenured, having full professor rank, and being a member of a network. Additionally, minority faculty also had a diminished sense of participation. Having earned a Ph.D. and extensive teaching experience were not related to perceptions of participation in decision-making. Denton and Zeytinoglu suggest that these findings reflect a culture in higher education that does not value women as authority figures and decision-makers and that these beliefs stem from gender stereotypes of women. That women don't feel part of the decision-making process is also representative of their exclusion from participation in influential administrative and faculty-based committees and organizations.

Eddy's (2009) interviews of community college presidents underscored the presence of stereotypes among the highest level university administrators. The female presidents claimed that their gender was present, while this was not the case for male presidents. The women were expected to behave along gender roles and felt the double-bind of compromise for both staying within and for stepping outside of the prescriptive role.

Although at an even greater disadvantage facing both racism and sexism (Tyson, 2002), minority female administrators' experiences reflect the same themes as described in general in the literature. Lindsay (1999) completed a qualitative study of four African-American senior-level administrators at higher education institutions, three presidents and one provost. Their reflections on the difficulties of being a female minority in an executive role included not only that they faced individuals who could not accept women in a position of authority but also that higher education does not value women and minorities. They shared that they felt they had to work harder and that expectations for

them were higher than for White males. They felt they needed superior qualifications than the males and expressed frustration over the power and influence of informal networks from which they were excluded. Lack of access to this kind of informal support made it harder for them to rebound from difficult situations. Impediments along their career included "insecure, incompetent bosses," and being betrayed by colleagues whom they thought they could trust. At the same time, they believed their presence as a woman and as a minority was a positive influence for women and other minority students. When asked about the presence of so few women in higher level positions, they suggested that gender bias, stereotypes, and discrimination are to blame, and that women who are strong are often seen in a negative light. One woman articulated that searches may often include a minority candidate when there is truly no interest in hiring one. This practice was described as a way to promote the appearance of equity, while no such end result was actually desired.

A revealing study by the National Council for Research on Women (2006) highlighted and summarized issues and concerns around the paucity of women as higher education leaders. The Council, established in 1981 and comprised of 120 national research, policy, and advocacy centers dedicated to the improvement of the lives of women and girls, conducted a leadership study of higher education institutions, looking exclusively at issues of inclusion and exclusion. Fueled by concerns around the underrepresentation of women and minorities among the leadership in higher education, the study group focused on eight colleges and universities considered to have made strides in addressing these issues. Twenty to thirty leaders on each campus were interviewed, and the report summarizes the highlights of the interviews.

While issues of diversity have been addressed on some campuses to the extent that faculty, staff, and students feel supported and empowered in their commitment to the issue, problems were identified at most other institutions. In particular, the concept of diversity was seen as evolving, and this evolution was manifest differently on different campuses. Definitions of diversity expanded from minorities and women to other social groups including the economically disadvantaged, various religious populations, and those in nontraditional gender groups as well as differences present due to age. Given this challenge of integrating numerous populations, feelings of isolation and issues of power became prevalent and sometimes pitted groups against one another. Established institutional hierarchies committed to the cause to varying degrees. Clashes between older and younger generations erupted, and concerns for the distribution of resources became battle grounds.

A second conclusion was drawn from this study reflecting that the president has a unique leadership role and that the issue of supporting diversity must start at the top. When addressing diversity issues, if this responsibility was outside of the president's purview and mandate, outcomes rarely materialized. It was clear that the message of diversity must come from the institution's highest leadership body. An advantage was seen in developing a single office, reporting directly to the president, to be responsible for creating, overseeing, and supporting these efforts on campuses.

Additionally, accountability was an issue in terms of reporting status and outcomes, and clarity around goals and objectives was lacking. To further complicate clarifying the issues, institutions lacked demographic and hiring pattern data that was necessary to assess current states among the various populations. Offices and departments

were left without the muscle to enact change, and systems of reward and punishment were vague and often not established. Without budgets, resources, and power, these groups had little to work with, and they also lacked the power to effect change. At some institutions, the charge for making things happen fell inevitably to certain groups and individuals, often women and minority faculty/staff, who commonly were called upon regarding these issues. On many campuses, it was acknowledged that pursuing diversity goals would continue to be a challenge until or unless White men accepted the problem as a legitimate one.

Existing, established institutional hierarchies particularly on the academic side are often outside the locus of control of administrative leadership. The power of academic departments and senior faculty may run parallel with administrative power, as these entities continue to attend to their own agendas. Additionally, hiring, tenure, and promotion systems are maintained within these groups and are outside of the control of university administrators. As such, it was viewed that they were not held accountable for supporting and promoting issues of diversity and inclusion.

**Obstacles for women in higher education.** As in other types of labor markets, women in higher education face similar difficulties in obtaining employment and rising in their profession. Stereotyping, discrimination, and marginalization of women hamper their efforts and quiet their voices. Despite changes in the demographics of higher education for women, institutional barriers persist. Failure to promote women can help to explain differences in the gender representation of our higher education leadership. Johnsrud's (1991) study of administrative promotion focused on the organization as a determinant of promotion and whether promotion varied based on one's gender. In this

case study, records for over 450 position vacancies over a three-year period were analyzed to identify individual characteristics or organizational characteristics relative to the outcomes of the hires. Vacant positions filled by internal candidates were the target population, and an evaluation of promotion was conducted based on administrative level. This evaluation looked specifically at promotion from an administrative or professional level (unskilled or skilled) into one of three categories: administrative and professional, competitive skilled, or unskilled labor. Findings indicated that women gained 1.6 less in administrative level than men when promoted despite the fact that no significant differences were present in age, race, or education level.

Findings also showed that women gained more in promotion when moving into a newly created position as opposed to an existing vacancy. It was also determined that prior position had a significant impact on the opportunity for promotion and that more women than men were promoted from unskilled to professional positions. Interestingly, while women were promoted in this fashion, they still gained less in administrative level when promoted. Given the difference in outcomes for promotion to administrative level for women being less than for men, the authors conclude that these results indicate that either some personal attribute not accounted for in the study was the cause of this difference or that those making hiring decisions discriminate against women. The authors also caution that since prior position significantly impacted promotion, placement of women into positions is a critical factor in their future opportunities. They also suggest that without knowing the nature of the new positions into which women are promoted, this may or may not be a positive determinant for women.

Johnsrud and Heck (1994) also explored the cumulative impact of promotion on

women which, again, worked to their disadvantage. This second study determined that women were disadvantaged in salary, status, and responsibility as outcomes when promoted. When looking at position prior to promotion, gender was a significant predictor of salary and job classification, and women were more likely to be in lower level and lower paying jobs than men prior to promotion despite the lack of difference in educational attainment and prior experience. The study also concluded that prior position had the strongest effect on promotion. When evaluating the outcome of promotion, being female had a significant and negative impact. Women were disadvantaged in the context of promotion based on their prior position and were subsequently subject to bias in terms of promotion. The result is a negative and cumulative effect for women seeking promotions.

Practices exist that maintain the status quo, and hiring is one of them. A similar study of administrative promotion at a large state university paints a bleak picture for women and minorities (Sagaria & Johnsrud, 1992). Looking at the administrative structure of the university overall, men were overrepresented at the highest levels of administration, while women and minorities were overrepresented at the lowest levels. When reviewing how vacancies were filled, it was revealed that the higher the salary, prestige, and authority of the position, the less likely it would be filled by means of an open search. Incumbents were more often sponsored, or recommended, for such openings, and the likelihood that a position would be filled by a sponsored individual rose as the administrative level of the position increased. When evaluating sponsored promotions, it was determined that men were overrepresented at the highest levels while women were overrepresented at the lowest levels. Minorities, however, were not even

represented as sponsored individuals. Additionally, it was also determined that women and minorities were overrepresented in promotions at the lowest levels, while the same was true for men's promotions at the highest levels. The authors conclude that the institutional practices influencing administrative promotion create greater opportunity for White men while keeping women and minorities in lower level positions even when they are promoted. The practice of sponsorship maintains the status quo and works to the detriment of women and minorities.

In terms of hiring, a study of a higher education institution conducted by Moss and Daunton (2006) revealed that despite the transactional leadership dimensions included as part of a job description, the majority-male interviewing team discarded those dimensions and substituted their own leadership criteria with which they identified and felt more comfortable and which reflected more transactional attributes of leadership. In male-dominated institutions, if this pattern exists and is persistence, the net outcome can result in the discrimination of women whose leadership styles are more transformational.

The notion of the glass ceiling as a barrier to advancement has also made its way into the lexicon of higher education. Jackson and O'Callaghan's (2009) comprehensive study of glass ceiling research indicates that 32 percent of the research specifically addressing the glass ceiling does so in a higher education context. Of all three disciplines explored in this study, business, education, and the social sciences, the highest level of consensus in support of a glass ceiling was present in education. All but two of the education studies concluded that a glass ceiling of discrimination was present, and this obstacle took various forms. Salary differences were highlighted as well as differences in faculty rank between males and females and the length of time spent seeking promotion.

These studies also concluded that the difficulties faced by women increased over the course of their careers and worsened over time.

Variations on the theme of the glass ceiling have been described in a higher education context. Quina, Cotter, and Romenesko (1998) describe the invisible barrier commonly known as the glass ceiling as a plexi-glass ceiling because, despite their best of efforts, many women can't break it. They contend that barriers are present, and segregation exists for women at all levels of higher education—faculty, academic staff, and administrators—and that a "sticky floor" often keeps women in their place. In their study of faculty, staff, and administrators, the authors discovered similarities in the types of barriers described by each group of university employees. Female employees faced power differentials and were pocketed into stereotypical roles that are traditional for women. These roles positioned them as having less access to influence within the organization. Differences for women were also expressed in terms of promotion practices, professional development, stereotypical attitudes minimizing the position of women, and devalued perceptions of competence.

Eagly and Carli (2007) discount the notion of the glass ceiling in today's world. The glass ceiling, they explain, is an inadequate description of the obstacles women face. It implies that women face barriers only when they reach the top, that the barriers are invisible, and also that women and men have equal opportunity to pursue leadership goals as they begin the ascent. None of these things is always the case. Instead, Eagly and Carli describe women's path to leadership as a "labyrinth," or maze of complexities and obstacles they encounter along the entire pathway. Women suffer a disadvantage in their current positions due to discrimination and devaluation from the past. Women are



underrepresented in leadership roles, are paid less than men, attain promotions more slowly than men, and receive lower performance evaluations. Elements of the labyrinth include a general resistance to women's leadership, conflicting definitions of what makes a good leader, and the consequences on professional life as a result of domestic and family responsibilities. Stereotyping, too, say Eagly and Carli, is a contributing factor to the labyrinth.

As bastions of men, our first colleges and universities were never intended for women. Against much resistance, women slowly entered the ranks as students and took their places among the leaders of our institutions. Along with them, though, came structures, beliefs, and barriers as remnants from gender roles in society and within our institutions which maintained a distinction between men's work and women's work, and stereotypes persist to this day that prevent women from obtaining leadership roles and from advancing in those roles. To the extent that the federal government got involved in an effort to mandate equality for women and men, more overt forms of discrimination have been replaced by subtle forms, and women are still subject to less obvious types of discrimination in the workplace. Those seeking and maintaining leadership roles are held to a double standard with regard to work while at the same time face difficulty in managing these roles and being assessed based on the contradictory stereotypes of women and leaders.

The story as just told paints a picture of the ways that stereotypes work to the detriment of women. Despite the reputation of our colleges and universities as places of democracy and academic freedom, they are also houses of tradition built on more than a century of male dominance. Stereotypes support this structure, and women must navigate

this maze of complexities with care in order to establish and maintain leadership roles alongside their male counterparts. To explore the nature of these stereotypes and the extent to which they restrict women in leadership roles in higher education administration, the methods section follows with a description of the process by which these issues will be investigated.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Methodology**

This study focused on female leaders in higher education administration and investigated the ways in which gender and leadership stereotypes have impacted their access to and success in leadership roles. Given that this study identified a marginalized group within higher education, an advocacy/participatory approach underlies the research methodology. This paradigm is characterized by a need for action and reform that may change the lives of the participants or the institutions in which they work (Cresswell, 2009). Advocacy research provides a voice for those studied and focuses on advancing an agenda for improvement. Clearly, the evidence of the marginalization and discrimination of women as leaders in higher education supports an advocacy approach, and raising awareness of underlying causes resulting in lessened opportunities for women is critical to promoting the notions of equity and fairness.

Qualitative research, described as an effective means by which individuals' experiences and perceptions can be examined (Cresswell, 2009), was utilized to conduct this study. It was chosen as a research method given its value in exploring subjects too complex for either experimental or survey research (Bloor & Wood, 2006). An important attribute of qualitative research is the focus on the meaning that the participants bring to the research. The overall methodology was situated to call attention to important research questions and to allow the subjects to describe their lived experiences in their own words.

#### **Research Design and Data Sources**

This study combined the advocacy worldview with a case study strategy of inquiry. A multiple case study design was employed, and a purposeful sampling strategy

was used to identify three females who have considerable experience in higher education administration leadership roles based on longevity and level of authority. The case study approach was chosen given its effectiveness at exploring events, processes, or individuals that are bounded by time and activity (Cresswell, 2007). The purpose of the case study design is to gain an in-depth understanding of the processes taking place within a setting and may include a single or multiple cases (Bloor & Wood, 2006). The case study is considered to be a legitimate approach to research, yielding meaningful findings and contributing to the application of theory (Berg, 2009). Since the interest here lies in individual perceptions of stereotypes as they relate to gender and leadership, this information would be quite difficult to ascertain through a fixed-question survey instrument.

A purposeful sampling strategy was employed to give the researcher the opportunity to identify women in higher education leadership roles who have experienced the effects of stereotypes. Three women were selected, and three semi-structured interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed. The semi-structured interview data collection method was intended to allow some flexibility during the process in order to spontaneously pursue ideas initiated by the interviewee (Berg, 2009). Three female administrators were selected as the participants for this research, and the selection was intentional. Two of the individuals currently hold leadership positions in higher education administration, and the third spent 30 years as a higher education administrator and has since changed careers. These individuals were chosen because they have held leadership positions in higher education administration at varying levels. One was a midlevel director in academic affairs for many years, and a second is currently an associate dean,

also a midlevel leader, working at the school level. According to Rosser (2004), this population of administrative leaders has rarely been studied despite the important role they play in support of the institution's mission and goals and is one of largest growing segments of college and university personnel. The third individual holds a senior level administrative position as a vice president for academic affairs.

Through personal and professional interactions with these women, it had been observed that each had experienced difficulty navigating their leadership roles given what was expected of them and how they have been treated because they are women. These participants were selected with the expectation that they had strongly formed opinions about their roles as leaders as well as how the stereotyping of women is symptomatic of discrimination or marginalization in higher education administration. There was also the expectation that just because they are women, several if not many of the themes described in the literature review would become evident throughout the course of the interviews. An underlying assumption of the researcher is that most women would be able to speak to issues of discrimination and marginalization in the work place. These individuals were selected because they are assertive, have clear goals in their roles as leaders, and it was anticipated that they would speak candidly about their experiences as female leaders. According to Cresswell (2009), “the idea behind qualitative research is to *purposefully select* participants...that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (p. 178). The expectation with these participants was that they would provide direct answers to the questions in ways that would reveal the purpose of this research.

## **Data Analysis**

The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded for themes. According to Cresswell (2009), this combination as a basis for research is effective for those seeking to explore issues related to the oppression of groups. Stories of individuals are collected through interviews, and narrative analysis is utilized to examine how they have experienced oppression. The researcher personally transcribed each of the interviews and through this process was able not only to listen closely to the participants answers but also to reflect on their tone, mood, and phrasing. The data analysis proceeded in two stages utilizing several First Cycle Coding methods followed by a Second Cycle Coding method (Saldaña, 2009). First cycle methods were intended to explore the data at a macro level and to parse the narrative for elements that stood out. To begin, a descriptive coding method was initiated to analyze basic topics or themes that arose throughout the interviews. In Vivo coding was used frequently, and this method constitutes the use of the interviewees' actual words to convey what had been said rather than to paraphrase the meaning and intent. Process coding was used to search for the interviewees' action, interaction, or emotion as a situational response. Coding began as an inductive process and involved open coding of the interview in order to identify themes articulated by the participants. Open coding is described as the examination of text (i.e., interview transcript) toward the formulation of theoretical or analytical codes used to represent examples of phenomena or ideas (Gibbs, 2007).

As a Second Cycle coding method, axial coding was applied in order to identify conceptual categories and relationships among themes. Finally, deductive analysis was conducted to relate the research findings back to the research questions. A direct

interpretation of the data was pursued whereby the researcher looked to specific instances in order to glean meaning (Cresswell, 2009). The process of “pulling the data apart and putting them back together in more meaningful ways” (Cresswell, 2009, p. 163) was the goal as the findings were related back to the research questions and theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

### **Validity and Reliability**

Validity addresses the idea that what is represented in the study is, in fact, reflective of what actually occurred (as cited in Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). Cresswell and Miller (as cited in Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002) identify a number of ways in which research can be validated and recommend that at least two procedures be implemented for any study. This study was validated through the use of member checking, whereby the participants were asked to review the paper and its findings for accuracy. The purpose of this exercise was to ensure that the messages that were intended by the participants were those that were conveyed through the research. Member checks are “the most crucial techniques for establishing credibility” (as cited in Flick, 2007, p. 33).

In addition to member checks, rich, thick description was used to describe the participants’ responses to give the results a fuller and more realistic presence. Evidence in the form of quotations from the interviews has been included as a means of conveying participant understanding and has been validated by the participants as sound (Gibbs, 2007).

Finally, as displayed in Table 1, interview questions were mapped to research questions to ensure that the right questions were being asked, and the questions were then

related back to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

Table 1

*Relationship of Research Questions and Interview Questions*

Research Question	Interview Question	Theory
RQ1: In what ways do women in higher education experience conflict between gender and leadership roles and associated stereotypes?	IQ.2: In what ways has the incongruity between gender and leadership stereotypes resulted in a less favorable assessment of your potential for or behavior as a leader? IQ.4: Describe your experiences of how gender-appropriate behavior is enforced through structures, expectations, interactions, policies, and practices at work. IQ.5: Is there anything else you wish to share related to your work experience and experiences of gender and leadership stereotyping that I haven't asked?	Role congruity theory - stereotyping results in a less favorable assessment of women's potential for and performance as leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002) Organizations and gender roles (Ely & Padavic, 2007)
RQ2: In what ways does the incongruity between gender and leader roles diminish opportunities for women to assume leadership positions?	IQ.1: How has your potential for or access to leadership roles been impeded and/or restricted by gender stereotypes?	Role congruity theory – stereotyping of women results in less access to leadership roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002)
RQ3: In what ways does this incongruity create additional obstacles for women in leadership roles?	IQ. 3: As a leader, describe obstacles you face in your attempts to be successful in leadership roles that you believe are a result of gender and/or leadership stereotypes.	Role congruity theory – stereotyping of women results in more obstacles to overcome (Eagly & Karau, 2002)



## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings**

Women are underrepresented in leadership roles not only in business and industry but in higher education as well. While women have increasingly maintained a majority with regard to enrolled undergraduate and graduate students, their presence in leadership roles in higher education is not representative, and women are pocketed into certain roles, certain types of positions, and their presence varies based on institution type. Eagly and Karau (2002) posit that, due to the incongruity between the leadership stereotype and the female gender-role stereotype, women are underrepresented as leaders. This incongruity results in a prejudice against women, and this prejudice results in lessened access to leadership roles, reduced assessment of women's leadership potential and performance, and additional obstacles as women enact leadership roles. To explore Eagly and Karau's role congruity theory, this study aimed to examine the effects of stereotypes on women leaders in higher education administration in order to determine if they, in fact, experienced lessened opportunity and additional obstacles as they sought and enacted leadership roles. Specifically, three women leaders were interviewed and are identified by pseudonyms. Their stories follow.

Elle is a 42-year-old Associate Dean in a School of Education in a medium-sized research university located in an urban area in the northeast region of the United States. She has spent sixteen years working in higher education and held prior positions as an assistant professor and an associate professor. She has earned a Ph.D., has been at her current institution for the past five years, and is tenured. Elle is an African American woman and is married with two children.

Linda is a 53-year-old Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs at a small university just outside of a large metropolitan area in the northeast. She has spent twenty-four years working in higher education, having held positions as a tenured faculty member, assessment coordinator, acting dean, and assistant provost. Linda has earned a Ph.D., has been at her current institution for four-and-one-half years, and is Caucasian/Hispanic and single.

Jenny is a 57-year-old who spent 30 years in higher education in the college admissions field. Jenny held positions as Associate Director, Senior Associate Director, and Director of Admission. She is currently employed at a public high school in a major northeast city where she is Director of College Placement. She earned a Master of Science degree and has completed an additional thirty credits beyond the Master's. Jenny has been in her current role for two years, has two adult children, and is Caucasian and divorced.

Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with these women, and the interview transcripts were coded and analyzed for themes as they relate to the three research questions. Table 2 displays the relationship of the themes to the research questions.

Table 2

*Relationship of Themes to Research Questions*

Research Question	Themes
RQ1. In what ways do women in higher education experience conflict between gender and leadership roles and associated stereotypes?	Female gender roles, personal and professional identity, equality, double standards, leadership style, performance standards

RQ2. In what ways does the incongruity between gender and leader roles diminish opportunities for women to assume leadership positions?	Dislike of strong women, male preference, equality, male-dominated culture, discrimination
RQ3. In what ways does this incongruity create additional obstacles for women in leadership roles?	Hostile work environment, lack of support and power, sacrifice and compromise, stereotype threat, equity, favoritism, retaliation, women versus women, male-dominated leadership, and reward, recognition, and promotion

In response to the first research question, the women described the conflict they experienced resulting from the incongruity between leadership and gender roles in a variety of ways. Jenny and Linda talked about how women are viewed first based on their gender role and are therefore expected to behave and respond in certain ways because they are women. The women talked about how women are always the ones to make the coffee, take the minutes, or buy that birthday card. The expectation for adherence to gender roles made them reflect upon as well as question their identity as they tried to reconcile the differences between their actual behavior and the behavior expected of them. Performance standards also created conflict for all three women due to their experiences of a double standard between the behavior expected of them and the condoned behavior of their male counterparts.

The incongruity between leadership and gender stereotypes diminished leadership opportunities for all three women. For Elle, her experience was that women are simply not treated as equals, are not viewed as having the potential, and are expected to stay in their place and do as told. In addition to gender, race is a part of her understanding of being a woman and of these expectations. Jenny's experience was one of being passed

over for promotions and hires on many occasions in favor of men, and her assessment of these experiences was essentially that strong women are disliked and not supported.

Linda experienced outright discrimination. Both Elle and Linda quit their jobs on their way up the ladder because they were denied commensurate opportunities for advancement.

In leadership roles, all three women faced obstacles that they described as gender-related. Elle shared stories of sacrifice, compromise, and inequity, and stereotype threat was and continues to be a constant means of navigating around obstacles. Jenny, too, described the obstacles in terms of sacrifices she faced, and a lack of power combined with a hostile work environment created constant roadblocks for her. Linda described how favoritism, reward, promotion, and recognition created barriers for her. Additional obstacles included a male-dominated culture as well as retaliation. Two of the women paid the ultimate price as leaders and attributed this outcome to their gender. Linda stepped down from a deanship because of disparate treatment, and Jenny walked away from a thirty-year career after years of continual rejection and mistreatment.

### **The Women's Stories**

The findings begin with a brief summary of each of the women's stories followed by their responses as they relate to each of the research questions.

#### **Elle's Story**

The conflict surrounding stereotypes in the context of one higher education institution was not only about gender for Elle. She also struggled with stereotypes around age and race as well as gender, and these three were difficult to segregate and differentiate from one another. Her aspirations and expectations for becoming a leader

were conflated by gender-, race-, and age-based expectations, and she addressed and acknowledged her need to navigate between and around them. It was perceived, however, that in her responses, Elle purposely tried to separate them in answering the questions, as she admittedly doesn't experience one without experiencing the other. The interview began this way:

When I read that question, I thought...well, when was a time when this was about gender...where I actually felt like this was just about gender? Not about my age...sort of being young...and not about race. But when was a time that I felt, oh, this is just because I am a woman?

### **Jenny's Story**

It took nearly a quarter of a century for Jenny to finally land that director's position. Along the way, she faced many obstacles and vividly described the lack of support and hostility she encountered as she tried to assert her position as a leader and a decision-maker. Themes for Jenny included others' dislike of strong women, gender roles, hostility from both women and men, and a lack of support and inclusion in executing her responsibilities. Jenny also talked a lot about the ways that she continually tries to be a role model for younger women in acknowledgement of the stereotypes against which we battle on a regular basis.

### **Linda's Story**

Linda's experiences of stereotyping resulted from discrimination, retaliation, and gender differences highlighted throughout her career in terms of performance standards, promotion, reward and recognition, as well as favoritism. Some of what was said was hard to listen to, and it seemed as though the stories just kept coming—one after

another—examples of discrimination and favoritism that minimized Linda’s contributions and at times caused her to question herself. Interestingly, there was quite a bit of laughter throughout the interview, but it stemmed from astonishment, sarcasm, and disbelief that these things had actually happened and that these words were actually coming out of her mouth.

Before the interview began, Linda immediately shared a story about a meeting she had just attended. How odd to have had this experience just prior to an interview about how women are disadvantaged in the workplace, she remarked. It turned out that Linda had just come from a Title IX hearing during which complaints were being investigated about a male student accused of harassing two female employees. Linda could not believe what had happened. The university’s Title IX officer just so happens to be a White male, and the response to the women’s accusations was unbelievable to Linda. He was protecting the accused male! He was sticking up for him and excusing away his behavior toward the women—an unbelievable outcome. In a system that’s set up to protect against sexual harassment, having a male in charge had just the opposite effect. In this very important role, the Title IX officer was displaying blatant favoritism toward the accused male. No justice would come of this. None whatsoever...and so it began...

### **Research Question One**

The first research question was: In what ways do women in higher education experience conflict between gender and leadership roles and associated stereotypes? Themes reflected throughout the interviews are discussed below in response to this research question.

### Elle's Experience

**Equality.** A strong theme and great source of conflict stemming from stereotypes had to do with the notion of equality and whether women and men were viewed and respected equally. The lack of gender equality, particularly in the field of education, may have come as somewhat of a surprise to Elle, although there was an indication that she was prepared for that. Upon joining the faculty at a university, she reflected, "When I walked in, I was thinking, oh, well, look at all of the opportunities here. They have a woman..." She noticed the presence of a woman and made assumptions about the environment and culture, only to discover that "there were very gendered expectations of what you would do even in those [leadership] roles." She learned that men and women were not considered to be equal, and women were restricted in their roles and the kinds of contributions they were permitted to make.

In this particular environment, women were expected to be subordinate and were not viewed as equal partners.

My role was to learn from them and to do essentially what they said. What I realized even though there was a woman who had a leadership title, is that's what she did. I just found it quite interesting that they put her in a role with very much a leadership title but did not allow her to lead and contribute in those ways. They only allowed her to do what they needed done to fit their organization...*[laughs and adds sarcastically]*...or *disorganization*...and the stereotypes around that. I'll give you a clear example. We would go into faculty meetings, and this woman who had an associate dean title would take the minutes, she would get the coffee, she would do any number of stereotypical things you might think of as gendered

for a woman to do.

While she had an associate dean title, when it came down to the work she did, “a very competent administrative assistant could have done the work she was doing.”

There was an underlying assumption (or hope?) of equality, while at the same time, Elle looked for confirming evidence of this and thought she saw it due to the presence of another woman. So, the expectation or desire was one of equality tempered with an underlying expectation, and subsequently a confirmation, of inequality. Being a woman meant you couldn’t also be a leader. In her attempts to contribute, Elle received a different kind of message: “[They] were essentially saying, ‘That’s not your role here.’” She struggled with what she had heard.

It was the first time I had ever personally been told...where someone actually said it and felt comfortable saying it. And that was where, again, for the first time, I said this is about me being a woman. Not about what I know, not about my age, not about my race. This is about their understanding of who should run the school.

There were gendered expectations for women who were expected to “stay in your place, do as told, [do] not buck the system. I think that was very clear...you do not buck the system.” Elle experienced the repercussions of sharing her thoughts and ideas. “So, when I came in, and I would question, for example, or I felt as if my knowledge base was equal to other people’s knowledge base—including the men—that was a problem.” Her dean attempted to put Elle in her place, as she continued:

...in that conversation, and this was the dean at the time who said to me, “Well, you were comparing...you compared yourself...” his words almost directly...  
“You compared yourself with an older [White] man who was on the faculty.”



The idea that I would put my idea or my thinking next to him was essentially like me comparing...I took that to explicitly mean your ideas do not compare to *his* ideas. I saw that very much about my gender.

This inequality stemmed not only from gender but also from a culture of White male dominance and privilege that served to disadvantage all women and women of color in particular.

***Double standard.*** A theme related to equality arose in the interviews—that of a double standard—where different standards were set and segregated by gender with women suffering a disadvantage. As a qualitative researcher, Elle shared her experiences of expectations around what you know and how you know it and how qualitative work is challenged. “We talk about stories. We talk about what we can glean from people’s experiences that informs us and how we’re better able to understand environments and contexts. Those experiences are not seen as scientific or as rigorous...they’re anecdotal.” She described how her work does not have the same legitimacy and is minimized. “I know a person who would totally disagree with you!” she laughed as she described the types of responses she receives. “It’s those types of ways in which we think about knowledge...when women’s ways of knowing are not valued.” She described it as a double standard but added, too, that “people listen for that,” as if to say they want to be able to catch you and challenge you. So, while women’s work is undervalued relative to men’s, women also face the threat of being challenged for what they put forward, while men do not.

Elle described the bind that she experienced, where

...you don’t want to be perceived as too strong, too emotional, but at the same

time, you don't want to be seen as too hard core. You want to be taken seriously, but you also want...[pause]...there are different expectations of you as a woman leader than as a man.

She used her husband as an example:

He's a very good guy, but he can go in and do his job and be seen as very competent and good at what he does if he never shows that kind of caring aspect or that gentle side of himself. But, I can't do that as a woman. As a woman leader, I need to be hard and soft at the same time, if you know what I mean. They need to feel comfortable with my "womanness," my femininity, and my nurturing ways at the same time that they don't want to see me be a pushover.

**Leadership style.** Differences in leadership style and the perceived ways of leading fit into stereotypical patterns along gender lines as well. Elle shared her belief that her perspective on leadership was very different from the male leadership in the school. She described how, at an early age, she saw herself as a bridge connecting multiple communities across racial lines and how those experiences had a "profound impact" on how she views herself as a leader:

But I think coming from that standpoint, in that position, also is what can be seen as threatening to men in certain environments. That's what I think was very difficult about the culture where I was before. This idea of sort of bridging different communities was *not* a part of the culture...was not a part of what was seen as leadership or the definition of leadership.

Elle struggled with the notion of leading in that type of environment.

Don't get me wrong. I've never been in a perfect place, and I'm not looking for a

perfect place, because I know they don't exist. What I'm looking for is a context where you can speak to issues of inequity, and you can begin to work toward a higher vision and a higher purpose for serving students. If that does not include values around social justice and equity as it relates to women, to people of color, to poor people, then I'm not interested in that. But I don't think you can talk about just serving a particular group. If you're talking about issues of equity, you've got to see it across the board. And so I would say leadership is a huge, critical part of that, so I would want to see it at every level. My agenda is about equity and creating...taking down barriers to opportunities. I'm in an institution of higher education, and that's my agenda. Any leader worth their salt should be doing that.

Elle's expectation was that women leaders step out of the traditional modes of leadership which have been a constant in higher education.

I had the women—deans, department chairs, whatever. They weren't looking to change structures. They were just towing the status quo, and I understand that, but at the same time, how do you navigate that to create it to be more equitable? How do you change things if you're just doing it the way it's been traditionally done, *oh*...but, you're also a *woman*. I think you have to bring that lens to it, bring that position to it—that way of knowing to it to *change* the definition of that role, to *expand* that role. Because that would mean that you, being a woman, you being gendered, actually contributes to that piece....That means that I can bring my knowledge as a woman to that position, and that position can expand and, oh, by the way, become better.

From Elle's perspective, a leader leads from within the context of the

environment and not despite it. “Because at the end of the day, it’s about respecting people and helping...having people feel that their ideas matter. And that’s what you do when you respect people. That’s how they feel...at all different levels.” Elle’s position was that women leaders can make a difference if they put the traditional leadership model aside and

...take our experiences and put them into policy and practice and change organizations, change structures, and name that as women’s ways of knowing. I would really like to see that. And then they become more valued...as opposed to us just adopting traditional ways of being and knowing in these contexts.

**Identity.** In terms of identity, Elle struggled with managing her self-image, looking for answers to conflicting messages clouded in stereotypes based on her gender, age, and race. Unlike Jenny and Linda, Elle lived also with racial stereotypes and believed that people viewed her first as an African American and secondly as a woman. While Elle was perceived to be a strong leader, she was constantly aware of these three characteristics as she navigated her daily role. Because of her race in particular, she didn’t want to be viewed as “the token,” but concedes that, as a minority in more than one way, she had to

...help people feel comfortable with [me] belonging. That’s just the way in which I’ve been socialized and part of being socialized in the minority. So, that’s why when you asked the question about stereotypes, they’re so related to me because of the different positions...they’re so interrelated and interwoven that it’s hard to break them apart and say, well this is because I’m black, or this is because I’m female, or this is because I’m poor.

Elle's socialization and upbringing were framed in the context of leadership, but folded into that was also the awareness of her difference:

I grew up around White people, but I was also placed in an environment where it was expected that I would be a leader. If having that sort of formation meant that I had to make people feel comfortable with who I am...so that they would allow me to be in a leadership position...so they would feel comfortable with my leadership if not my authority...I feel like I've been molded in that.

So, Elle managed her leadership self in the context of her racial and gendered self, has done that for a long time, and continues to do it today. How she handles herself as a leader calls for her to continue to balance her role and her behavior always taking race and gender into consideration as a response to the perceived expectations of others.

If we're too direct and forward, we're just...you know all the words that people associate with us...you know. We're all the negative things. If we're too emotive, then it's all those negative...so, we really have to sort of find that balance.

How Elle sees herself as a leader and the extent to which she will enact that role left no room for compromise. She described the higher education environment as male-centered with leadership enacted from a male perspective using dominance for the sake of dominance and at the expense of critical issues such as equity and social justice. As she reflected,

It goes back to my sense of...well, if I have to be *that* in this position, then I don't want to have to act like *that* in order to be defined as a leader. I don't want to have to enact that role in a way that means I can't bring in my understandings and ways of knowing the world.

In acknowledging women's struggles for equality, Elle commented that adopting the male perspective is not what that fight has been about.

My interpretation of the feminist movement and the ways in which women have been impacted is not so that women can assume male positions and become men. I don't want to be a man...you know?! And that *can't* be. That's not who I am. What I think it's about is women's ways of being and thinking and living in the world...us being equal to men. And if that's the case, then I don't have to act like a man in a leadership position.

### **Jenny's Experience**

**Gender roles.** The women who were interviewed for this research experienced the stigma of gender roles, and Jenny was no exception. While the story Jenny told about a former supervisor was somewhat funny, the underlying message was not.

When I worked for him, he told me, *told me*, "You can't wear pants to the office." I said, "I'm sorry...what?" And he's like, "Oh, no, the dress code here is you have to wear..." I said, "There's a *dress* code here?" I'm like are you kidding me? I said, "Uhh...when it's zero degrees out, and it's snowing, you want me to wear a skirt and panty hose?" "Well, ya, that's the preferred dress here." I go, "No, that's not happening." And I said, "When you do it, I'll do it." That was the end of that conversation. I'm like, are you *kidding* me? This is in the late eighties. *Seriously?* *No*. So, maybe I opened the door for other women to be able to do that, but I was like, that's ridiculous and that's...talk about stereotypes. You have to wear a skirt? I don't think so. As long as you look nice and you dress professionally, what difference does it make what you wear.

Jenny also talked about how women will minimize or diminish what they're about to say as if they are apologizing for their ideas in advance:

I think a lot of women...when they are speaking in a meeting, they'll say things like "I don't know if this is a good idea..." so they minimize what they are going to say, or they'll minimize what comes after that phrase because already nobody is listening.

Women are also not supposed to be decisive:

When you are in a leadership role, you have to make decisions. You can't sit and talk and talk and talk about it. That [drives] me crazy. Let's have a meeting, and let's have another meeting, but we never come to any...We never make any decisions. I think that when there's a man in charge of a committee, they are expected to come up with, you know, suggestions, decisions, and then for women, it's like, well, why don't you have another meeting? Let's have another meeting and talk about this. Well let's not! Let's decide now. I think the expectation across the board is that nobody [women] would ever come up with anything.

A twist on the indecision was also shared:

[My predecessor]—she's a very smart woman—chooses not to make decisions and, unfortunately, it was conveyed to me that why is she doing that? Because she's a mother—this is what a man told me—she's a mother, and she's focusing on her son and not her job. I was like, you know what, I'm pretty sure she's doing both. You're selling her short. Maybe give her a chance. Maybe you're not listening to her. So, that to me is like...and this is from a young guy. This is not an older guy but a young guy, so, oh, ya, she just cares about her son.

Jenny also offered that women must be careful so as not to be viewed in a sexual way and cautions that, even though some women do, they shouldn't

...use their wiles, their feminine wiles, to get their way....Because I think that women are already at a disadvantage because men already see them as—not all men—some men see them as sex objects, any way, right? So, in order to combat that you want to show them (a) you have a brain, (b) that you know what you are talking about and (c) in order to be taken seriously, you need to do certain things and not do certain things.

It's also expected that the women will be the caretakers:

Why is it that men can't make the coffee, or they can't think if it's someone's birthday, well, I'll go out and get the card, the flowers or whatever. They are never the ones who are asked to do that. It's always a woman, and what...what's that about? I think it's because the women are the nurturers 'cause men can't be nurturing...*oh, ok*. Women are the nurturers. They're the caretakers. They're the...you know...whatever, and that's such a stereotype, because men obviously...I mean sometimes men are better parents than women or better caretakers of other people...their mothers or fathers or whatever.

Jenny also talked about how, as a woman, you cannot display emotion.

I have two sides to me. I have the business side that I present. You know, everybody thinks, oh, she's really assertive. She knows what she's talking about. She's doesn't pull any punches. That's the business side—that's what I project. But on the backside, you know, which I don't share with a lot of people, is very emotional. I have a lot of emotions. You know, I'm sensitive. I learned early on



that that is not rewarded. That's not rewarded. That's too...*oh*, you're being just like a *woman*. What does *that* mean? You're being just like a *woman*?

**Identity.** Jenny struggled with bouts of insecurity based mainly on her belief that she was doing the right thing—leading in appropriate ways—yet receiving negative feedback from her superiors. She attributed the negativity to the fact that they were intimidated by her, that her supervisors viewed her as a threat, and that she paid the price for their incompetence. She also attributed this to her gender. When asked if she'd ever encountered the expectation that she behave in gender-appropriate ways, her response was, “Oh...*that's* been everywhere.”

Being a leader for Jenny was very much about relationships, setting a good example, and supporting her staff as a positive, influential role model. For her supervisor, however, it was just the opposite, and Jenny was never recognized for the contributions she made. As far as her boss was concerned,

...it was all about numbers. It was all about getting the job done. She didn't care about the people, so that was why there was always a revolving door of directors there, but I was never good enough, right enough. I don't know, and I really struggled with that, and I don't know if it was really me that wasn't good enough or if that was just really her problem.

Jenny was taken aback in realizing that she could not trust this woman, her supervisor, but stuck to her values.

I don't believe in leading by fear or by intimidation. I think that you lead by example. So, I don't think that there is anything wrong in my opinion with showing that you have a human side with people. People respect...you don't get

respect from somebody just because of a position or a title that you have. You have to earn people's respect. Well, how do you do that? You do that by respecting others. Now, that's how I've lived my life, and in some cases, that's been detrimental for my advancement, and in other cases it's been okay.

Jenny viewed her strength as an asset, although the fact that many found her to be intimidating throughout her career was evident. "You're surprising people, and you're not supposed to because you're a woman, and instead of being praised for your actions, it gets you into hot water." Her strength was also reflected in her personal life:

You know, there have been instances in my life where I've had to take on the role of a single parent. I had to take on the role of mother and father to two daughters, and I wanted to be a role model for my daughters so they would grow up to be strong women. So maybe I took on more of what was considered a man's role. But behaving like a man, asserting her knowledge and expertise, and making decisions just made her supervisors uncomfortable.

Being a positive role model for women was a theme for Jenny as well:

Especially for young women now-a-days, they don't seem to recognize [that they are at a disadvantage]. They think they are on equal footing with men. I just don't think that's true. I don't think... I would love to say that women have gone...since the seventies when we burned our bras and marched on Washington...whatever... I would love to say we have come a long way. We have not come as far as we think we have. So if one person, if I can feel good about....I want to leave a legacy that I have helped young women along the way. I'm going to keep doing that.

Having lived through the struggle of not being acknowledged because she behaved out of character for a woman, Jenny made it a priority to set an example for those who would follow her.

### **Linda's Experience**

**Performance standards.** In her stories, Linda shared evidence of a double standard where performance and accountability standards were inconsistent between women and men, with women paying the higher price. Early in the interview, Linda addressed the difference between her work and the work of her male colleagues. “That’s the number one thing I still see now that women, once we reach a certain level, and I’m at a fairly high level, we do far more jobs, far more multi-tasking.” As it turned out, there are three associate vice presidents at the university—Linda and two males.

There are three people with the same title that I have. One is a person with the same title at the same money in charge of logistics and just monitoring the budget. Sometimes helps with a student problem. The other person is more of a person that goes outside the university and builds external relationships, so there’s really no work. And then, you see all of mine. And the expectations!

Although her supervisor was aware of the differences, her response was, “You *know* they can’t do all *that*! [*exaggerated sympathy*] You know they can’t do all *that*, Linda! I really rely on you to do this...” So, Linda was put in a position where she was forced to endure the imbalance.

A question was asked about differences in terms of accountability between women and men. “The expectations for their performance are at a lower level. I have found this fairly...I’ve found this everywhere. And it’s taken me a long time to really

accept that as a reality.” Linda doesn’t shy away from the work: “But I didn’t mind the work. But still, the expectations for my work versus the males in the same situation...” She then considered possible reasons for the difference, suggesting, perhaps, that the older one gets, the more entitled he is to relax a bit?

Now maybe, they’re both around 63 years old, 64, 65, in there, maybe that’s part of it...their age. And I’m 53, so that’s a little bit different age group. That might be...but I...just...overwhelmingly that’s what I still see. So, everyone respects the quality of my work. Everyone knows that I have integrity, but I don’t think...I think that the expectations are always heaped on me for more.

She described how others observed the same differences. “So, it’s not just my own perception. It’s the awareness of the other colleagues, too. Everybody else sees it...it’s embarrassing because they say, ‘We know!...’” To manage this conflict, Linda tells herself, “Don’t think about what other people get. Just concentrate on yourself and your own achievement.” Unfortunately, this is little consolation. Linda will come to find that, despite her efforts, the men are rewarded in terms of promotion and favoritism, and she becomes a victim of retaliation.

**Gender roles.** Linda experienced conflict with regard to gender roles and the judgment of women who maintained or stepped outside of those roles. She continued:

When I was in the union, because I wasn’t a married woman, so many men would talk and say are you lesbian? It’s just funny. So there’s always this stuff that goes around that you have to deal with personally.

She talked about the importance of appearance and assumptions that are made of you based the clothes you wear and the way you style your hair.

I don't know how to say this...but it was...you had to be very careful about what you looked like....Because I think that if you...if men were attracted to you in some way, there's sometimes a different...then, there's a stereotype that goes along with that, and I didn't want to be perceived that way or that I was trying to get ahead...you know. There were *clearly* those kinds of...[*laughs*]...so it was either one way or the other. They were going to think you were using it to get ahead or you're a lesbian, aren't cha?? [*lots of laughter*] *Oh, yes!*....how about *both*?? [*laughs*] So you could see that. So, I do think that the way you dress, particularly when you're 30s and younger and 40s, they're looking at that and can make judgments based on that.

Other stereotypes that Linda referenced are those describing how women are supposed to be passive and submissive.

Young girls are taught not to look too smart, because boys won't like you then. And then, we don't want to look too aggressive....I think a lot of women don't want to be perceived to be overly aggressive. Sometimes that backfires, too....I'm fairly forthright, so if there is a large group, I will be one of the few women who will speak up because that's not usual...the practice...we know all the studies...small group, women feel more comfortable talking in small groups. I count. I still keep a count, and it is *overwhelmingly* males who speak in the large open forums. And people don't seem to think that's a problem.

Linda's observations were consistent with male/dominant-female/subordinate roles, and she struggled with the ways in which these stereotypes are still present and work to the disadvantage of women.

I think...[pause]...I think still to this day that the biggest, the biggest problem is this idea of what the roles are. And I see it even with my own boss.... Well, we still take the notes. It's a rare occasion when I see a male becoming the secretary. Or taking the minutes or doing any of that.

In reflecting on how men are regarded,

...it's always looking to the male to protect or to do the right thing.... It's tough, and you don't want to go around screaming about it every day, but I feel obligated at this age to speak up about it and to provide that role model for other women. I do. Because, somebody has to do it. Somebody has to...we *have* to.

### **Research Question Two**

The second research question was: In what ways does the incongruity between gender and leader roles diminish opportunities for women to assume leadership positions? Themes reflected throughout the interviews are discussed below in response to this research question.

#### **Elle's Experience**

**Equality.** Again, equality was a theme for Elle, and the lack of equality between women and men kept women at a disadvantage. According to Elle, what women had to offer was not valued at the level that men's work was, and women paled in comparison. Elle experienced this type of discrimination, where it was viewed that she was comparing herself to older male colleagues, and the message conveyed was one of disapproval. For Elle, it was a very clear message. The level of expectation for women's performance and contributions was lower, but, even worse, it was discouraged and perhaps even punitive. It was not a woman's place to put herself at a level equal with men.

Setting a double standard for the expectations of women and men left Elle uneasy. “It was highly uncomfortable and not very productive. I just felt like a fish out of water.” Not having the opportunity to contribute and to demonstrate her abilities led Elle to the conclusion that the men were threatened by her.

I truly attribute that to me being a woman who had very high aspirations *and* capabilities. It wasn’t just that I aspired to these things, but I was very capable, and I felt in a sense they were very threatened by that...very threatened. When I was bringing different ideas and comparing them with the traditional ideas of that culture and putting them on an equal plane, that was a problem.

Receiving the message loudly and clearly, Elle left. She quit her job and was comfortable doing it. The message was

...you haven’t earned that. And with the construct that they had, there was no way that I would ever earn it. Right?! So, it was a lose-lose scenario. So, you can stack it so that there was no way that I was ever...if my credentials and if my experiences coming in don’t make my ideas equal to yours, what would??

[*laughs*] There was just not opportunity for me to advance....It was clear that they were never going to allow me to be a department chair or any other type of administrator in that environment, because I hadn’t in their mind earned that.

So, in terms of leadership, Elle didn’t even get the chance to step on that first rung of the ladder. She had considered suing. “They had been sued in the past, [*laughs*] but I didn’t think that suing would make the situation any better.”

**Culture.** Elle described the higher education culture as one filled to the brim with male traditions, male dominance, and male-centered thinking. Neither acknowledgement

nor acceptance of women's ways of knowing and doing was common in this culture.

Women aspiring to become leaders were stymied, and even those in leadership roles were restricted. Referring to the associate dean, Elle "never thought of her as a leader because that was not how it was enacted or allowed to be enacted in that context. It was very stereotypical in terms of what a woman's role is and what she knew." The men position the women in stereotyped roles, and other women see it. But "it was very much a part of the culture. It wasn't questioned." Not only that, Elle added, "I never got the impression that this woman questioned this. I never got the impression that she felt there was any problem [*laughs*] with the way in which she was enacting this leadership role."

In moving from one higher education institution to another, Elle's experience of the culture went from blatant stereotyping to a more subtle form of stereotyping.

I think in terms of gender, there have been any number of other ...what I think of as sort of daily or weekly...*slights* that women experience in the workplace.

Those become...[*long pause*]...how should I say...I want to say a part of the norm. It just becomes a barrier that you are accustomed to navigating.

So, even though women may be present in leadership roles, the culture was so male-centered that women's ways of knowing and leading were not valued or accepted in this environment. Elle drew a parallel to structures:

It's the structures. It's the whole sort of way in which the vast majority of our organizations are structured in a very top-down, authoritarian way that one might associate with traditional ways of male thinking. When we think about the academy and the ways it operates, the academy was not created in its origins to be inclusive of women in any way. So, many of our traditions in academia still stem



from those origins. How we think about structuring discipline, how we think about positions of authority, even how we think about training and dissertations and committees—those are all very male-created structures. So, the ways you operationalize those then take on those personas...those relationships...those power dynamics that one might define as very male-centered.

The culture was so thick and resistant that some women adopted this traditional role, even to the extent that they, too, oppressed other women.

Some of the folks in other situations that I felt have been the most oppressive to me were White women who were in positions of authority but were acting out their role. They were acting out that role, and that role dictated that you act this way. And acting this way meant that you took on very male orientations to the work.

When asked whether she thought this foul treatment by women was because of Elle's gender or because the female was trying to 'act like a leader,' Elle sided with the latter. However, Elle believes this is because of the culture—this is the expected behavior within the institution regardless of one's gender. "We can replace men and women in those organizations and still have the same impact." When asked why she thought women behaved in this manner, Elle responded:

They were essentially doing to an underling, to someone subordinate, what had been done to them. Here's the thing, gender—acting in gendered ways—from my understanding can be done by men or women. So, as a woman, I can be oppressive to other women, because I am enacting the culture's traditional ways of treating women. It's not that as women we've necessarily changed those

processes to be more inclusive.

Essentially, the culture dictated its leaders' behaviors, for both women and men, and the norm was to treat people in gendered ways.

The culture of oppressing people because of their gender is not relegated to just an individual. It's part of the culture. So, if I'm in a leadership position, and it's the culture here to be oppressive to women, just because I'm a woman doesn't mean that I'm going to change that. It doesn't mean that I'm not going to be oppressive. It's so hard to change cultures in that way. You may be very much caught up in how my role as a leader, my definition of a leader, or the definition of a leader in this context says I have to do this...and it happens *all the time*!

Elle talked about how the commonness of gender oppression has become the norm and how, as a result, there's no evidence of oppression to those who aren't subject to it. The marginalization becomes invisible because it's become woven into the fabric of the institution. We do things "over and over [and so it] becomes the norm. Then, it's harder for us to say, oh, this is gendered, or this is racist, or this is classist." Men and women both do it.

We're not immune from our sexist ways of being and acting and thinking because we are women. We all grew up in a sexist society, so that becomes part of our norm. So, how we treat people who are subordinate who are men, and how we treat people who are subordinate who are women, is going to take on that gendered role, because that's what we've been taught. *All of us*.

To counter this gendered culture, Elle returned to the notion of context:

A good leader recognizes that context matters, that our organizations are their

own kinds of beasts, and that structures are created to do exactly what they're designed to do. So if you have inequities, if you have people who are disenfranchised, then that organization was designed to do that, and it's doing it just fine. And if you're a good leader, then your responsibility is to work toward making that organization, that structure, that environment, more equitable. That's how I see it in my role as a leader.

### **Jenny's Experience**

**Strong women.** Jenny sees herself as a strong woman and has always enacted her leadership roles through this lens. That strength, however, has been viewed over and over again as intimidating by both peers and supervisors and often has led to less than a warm reception. With the director's position vacant, even though Jenny had twenty years of experience, she ended up as the *Senior Associate Director*:

Even though I got promoted to senior associate director, I never became the director, because she [the vice president] didn't want anyone in that role who would really answer back to her, had their own opinion, and that seems to be the thing with I think a lot of people in power and in leadership roles.

A woman with lesser credentials was hired to be the director:

She was absolutely not qualified, but I think the vice president thought it was somebody she could probably push around. She would do what she wanted to do, and she was absolutely intimidated by...I don't know...chalk it up as intimidated by *me* because I had a lot of experience.

When Jenny finally achieved that director's role, she still faced the same kind of resistance to her leadership from her new, male supervisor:

Do I think he was threatened by what I knew? *Ya!* It was just like Janet [the vice president described above] at the university. I mean, it's the same thing—just in male form. But by then, I'm like...I'm sick of this. This has now been going on now my entire career, and I don't think, although people have told me, I don't think I come across as intimidating, but I guess I do because I've had more than one person tell me that in my career that they're intimidated by me. Or intimidated by me because I present myself as a strong woman, which a lot of people don't like, or are you intimidated because I know a lot? Or is it both? Honestly, some people don't like strong women. They don't like them. I can't change that. At this stage in my life, I can't change who I am, and I'm not going to.

When talking about other women leaders, Jenny had similar observations:

I think when you have someone at the helm who is a strong woman [like the president at that other university], she gets written up. She gets lambasted in the press. Why is that? She's done unbelievable things. Why are we not cheering for her? But you know people go, "Gosh, got another seven-year term...?" Well maybe she deserves another seven-year term....Do I think that people like working for her? I don't know. I think that people are threatened by working for somebody like that, and I think that that continues to be a huge issue. When you have a woman in a leadership position, and you have a lot of men answering to her, they don't like it. They'll tell you they don't care, and I don't believe that. I absolutely don't believe it. I think that higher ed has a long way to go.

Jenny shared a second example of a strong woman being removed from her

position: There was a vice president that we had who I thought was really very decisive. She would really let you know, “This is good. Now, we need to do this...” She was good with feedback and also with making decisions, moving on, thinking outside the box. So, unexpectedly, two years ago or so, she stepped down from being vice president and was in like a consulting role with the department of nursing. Oh, uh huh...why’d that happen? Then, in her place, they put Elizabeth—who won’t make a decision. Not that she can’t, because she has a Ph.D., and she’s very bright...won’t make a decision to save her life. So it’s like why did you go from someone who thought outside of the box? So, you didn’t like the direction she was taking in school? What was that all about?

Taking Jenny’s personal experience into consideration along with what she has observed about other women leaders, being a strong, assertive leader and a female do not go hand-in-hand. People—both men and women—have a difficult time accepting that assertiveness and will criticize and even demote women because of it. About a former colleague, a female assistant dean, she said, “She was a strong woman in a male-dominated institution. People used to call her the ‘B’ word.”

**Male preference.** Jenny, whose qualifications and experience are extensive, was passed over for promotions and hires on many occasions, and men, with lesser or equal qualifications, were hired. As an associate director at one institution, she was named acting director when the director resigned.

When Mark left, I was acting director, and they hired Ralph, who was a man. That was absolutely a male-dominated institution...medical institution, male-dominated, when you think about it. When I think back on that, all the people in

leadership roles there, save for one, were men. When Mark left, they hired a man, even though I had been doing the job. They were like...well, you know, you're married, and you have kids. *Oh!* 'Cause *that* matters! 'Cause men *aren't* married and *don't* have kids, but because it's a *woman's* role to take care of the kids... You know that men can't do that. I can't take care of the kids and be a leader and be successful and have... You know I think there were times when it was like...well, you'll have to stay later... Well, who's going to take care of your kids?? Well, I have arrangements for that, so maybe you don't worry about that. You know, I always managed that and managed that balance, even when I was married.

As an associate director at another institution, she was passed over twice for the same promotion to director, and on the first occasion, the vice president to whom the director reports actually encouraged her to apply for the job. Then she hired a man. So, while Jenny had her private support, when it became public, her support vanished. Jenny was also passed over twice for a leadership position with an external higher education organization and remembered that experience clearly:

...OK, so I applied for the job with the state organization. John applied for the same job. Had no different credentials...I mean credential-wise, we had the same degrees, same level of degrees—both master's, similar experience in terms of number of years. I had Boston-related experience which he didn't have. And the interview...the first time with them was...oh my god...awful...just awful. And the second time I applied, which I should have known better, I was interviewed by two men who were kind of like, "Well, all of your experience is in the Boston area. Is there a reason why...how come you never moved any place else?" I said

because I had family here. Do they ask *men* that question? I'm pretty sure *not*!

How come you never moved anywhere else? 'Cause I had a house...I had kids...Do you ask anybody else that question? And then, when I didn't get the job, they gave it to...guess what...a man!

She also considered that not receiving a decision letter from the organization was gender-biased.

I don't get that. That's unprofessional, and trust me when I tell you, had that been a male, had I been a male candidate, you better believe I would have gotten an e-mail, a phone call, a message, a letter or something!

Jenny was also passed over for positions in higher education professional organizations.

So, somewhere in those years, I had been volunteering in the state organization for a long time...running conferences, chairing committees...things like that, and I was nominated to be president, and I was absolutely qualified, and they picked a man. And it was somebody—the same guy—who I used to work for, and while he certainly...he had the cache. He had the name. He had the institution, I guess.

And he was a man. And they had all these men in a row, and it was hard to break in doing that. So, he didn't have as much experience with the association or volunteerism as I did, yet he got picked. I was really upset about that. I got to be...I got picked a couple years later, but I never really forgot that, because it wasn't really fair. I got passed over.

When she was asked whether or not she believed the decision was a result of her gender, she answered the question with a description of the selection committee:

...mostly male...mostly White males. [pause] Yeah, mostly males, and so it's kind of like the good old boys' network. And actually, that's how the association was for a very long time. Trying to break in, trying to get anything done and be taken seriously, was very difficult, because it was the White males in charge. And there were several of us in the early and mid 90's who really worked hard to break through and change that stereotype in the association, which I'm happy to say it's now more of a blend. But, it wasn't without consequences.

### **Linda's Experience**

**Discrimination.** Early in her career as she was trying to establish her footing and begin the ascent, Linda experienced overt discrimination that she attributed to her gender. As many faculty members do, Linda signed a two-year contract to get started.

When I think back even at my first full-time job as a professor, when I was there the temporary years, there were eight of us. Seven of us were female, one male. This is when I was full-time at a state school, temporary faculty, full benefits, one-year contract. So, after two years, because it was a union environment, they either had to hire you or not. So, they had *one* slot to hire...and by far I had the highest student evaluations. By far I had...but who got the job? *One man*. He got the job. And so it was...[laughs]...let's go from there!

This comment was perceived as meaning...well, hang on. There's no place to go but up!

Later on, after having accepted a full-time, tenure-track position, Linda had worked for eight years and had become involved with union leadership. In these later years, Linda made an interesting discovery.

I had tenure and all of that, but when I became a vice president of the union, and



we were negotiating, I could see the salaries. So, I could see starting salaries based on when people were hired, and so I looked, and I said...*Oh...My...!* We [she and her female colleague] didn't realize this for about eight years, until I started in the union, that all of the men who were hired at the same time that we were received more money than we did for the same qualifications.

She was asked whether or not she pursued that issue with the union. No was the answer, "because all of the union leadership was male." [*laughs*]

The underlying assumption had been that, since there was a union, there was equity in positions and salaries. But after eight years of being paid less than the men, it was viewed that there was no recourse due to the dominant male leadership of the union:

It's hard to get past that kind of thing. But if you point it out, you're not going to get anywhere. People may not mess with you, but it's not going to allow you to go up the ladder...and then you don't want to be too good, because that can be intimidating.

"Did you ever think about suing?" she was asked. "Not until now. [*laughs*] Now I have a nice file. A thick file...I could sue...[*laughs*] No, you know, I think I was afraid."

"Afraid of what?" she was asked:

Losing the job...would I ever work again? What would happen? How would I take care of myself? I think sometimes, especially if you're a single women, you suck up a lot of stuff because what are you going to do?

Searching for a reason, the researcher asked, "You're living in a one-income household?"

That's it. If it's not coming in, it's not coming in. So, you think about that, and it's a terrible burden, too, but you keep...You learn how to put up with a lot more.

But you know, I eventually said no, I'm not going to stay there anymore, and that was a big move to make. I don't think there are a lot of people who would leave anywhere after 18 years to go somewhere else.

So, instead of making a steady climb up the ladder, Linda left. She quit her job and went elsewhere. She gave up the security of tenure and moved on to fight even bigger battles.

### **Research Question Three**

The third research question was: In what ways does this incongruity create additional obstacles for women in leadership roles? Themes reflected throughout the interviews are discussed below in response to this research question.

#### **Elle's Experience**

**Stereotype threat.** Elle described some of her behavior in ways that are consistent with stereotype threat, where reactions occur that are intentionally designed to reduce the likelihood that an individual will be stereotyped. When asked about barriers in the workplace, she responded by saying,

I think the biggest one is this idea of how conscious I am of how I frame things. I think because [I am] a woman, and particularly an African American woman, I'm very conscious of how I interact with people as not to feel like I am an angry...you know...person...

She was asked directly, "Are you talking about the stereotype of an angry Black woman?"

Yes, and particularly an angry Black woman who's going to go off...and those types of stereotypes of Black women in particular. I'm very conscious of how I interact with people because of that, and so, I'm mindful of tone. I'm mindful of

being pleasant...[laughs]...and all of those things.

When asked about her level of sensitivity around that stereotype, she concedes, “Well, I’ve grown up under that stereotype,” and it has become a natural part of her response mechanisms. She credited the culture for that and the subtle messages that underlie expectations steeped in stereotypes. “There are certain subtleties that always exist. One of the subtle ways in which it happens is...of my own sort of expectations and how I need to approach people so as not to be stereotyped.” This response system, or defense mechanism, was not necessarily a direct result of the higher education environment but, rather, a lifelong manifestation of her difference from the majority. Elle grew up in a context

...where I’ve always been hyper-aware of my marginalization because I was the *only*. So, for those folks who grow up in the context where they are the minority, you’re much more aware of what makes you different. So, I was much more aware of race and gender at an early age than I think people in the majority are.

In the work place, however, Elle returned to the subject of the culture of the environment and referred to the “slights” that women experience daily. The stereotyping of women is one of those slights, and Elle was always prepared to respond in a way that navigated those assumptions.

I think when I talk about the slights, it’s always the anticipation, so it’s like always having to think about...well, what would I say to this person so they don’t think that I don’t know what I’m talking about because I’m a woman? We speak in so many different languages depending on who we’re talking to, and I think it’s because we anticipate people questioning our knowledge base and what we know.

I think there's always a place to anticipate the gendered stereotype. When asked, "Are you saying we have to be prepared at any time and every time...?" "All the time in the professional world...absolutely."

**Compromise and sacrifice.** Elle had been groomed to become a leader and had assumed a leadership role within a school of education at a medium-sized university. But her experiences up to that point created doubt in her mind around whether or not she would be "successful" in this role. Having observed traditional male leadership poised to undermine women combined with feeling the wrath of oppressive female leaders replicating their male counterparts' behavior left Elle hesitant in determining the extent to which she could participate as a leader in ways that were consistent with her identity.

The way in which I think it evolved for me more as a woman over the years and now that I am in a leadership role...to what extent do I want to take this leadership position? So, I'm very conscious of my trepidation or my *unenthusiasm*....[laughs]...about being in higher leadership roles...I am leery of what being in those positions means for your identity...for the work that you want to do...for being able to do good.

Specifically, Elle was referring to her need to be able to bring those multiple identities—those multiple positions—to her work and to incorporate those into the culture and expectations of everyone in that environment. She clearly was not willing to sacrifice those values and adopt the status quo mentality and modes of leadership. She added,

...I think I am cautious about taking leadership positions because I don't ever want to feel like I have to sacrifice myself—meaning my voice as a woman or my voice as an African American—in order to occupy that leadership position.

Male-centered, biased leadership was identified as an obstacle for women leaders. Women in leadership roles are faced with the challenge of balancing their leadership styles within male-dominated arenas which are not always welcoming to them. They often have to choose between going against the grain or going against what they believe is the best course of action. In Elle's case, "if I were in that context, not unlike what I was in before, then I would not be able to function very well."

Male-centered, biased organizations were identified as obstacles for women leaders. Elle's concerns about leadership reflected that. She wondered about moving further up that ladder and the likelihood that the organization was one that embraces male tradition and dominance. "One of my fears as I move up...or whether or not I move up...is the higher...When do you find organizations...that...How many of them out there are not...you know...[long pause]." "Aren't what?" she was asked. "Male—very male centered in their leadership styles for lack of a better word." Her concern reflected her belief that equitable structures are not present in organizations.

I think that there's a way in which things are so traditional and seen as normalized that they don't ever question how they create patterns...how they disenfranchise people. And in a context where people are not critical about that at every level...it would be very hard for me to think about leadership in that environment. Does that make sense?

**Persistence of inequity.** For Elle, the perception was that things won't change. She recalled an observation she had had nearly twenty years ago:

I remember being 24 years old working on my Ph.D. and going out for a break during one of my courses. The course was on the sociology of knowledge and

looking at how people think, and I said to one of my colleagues...and I was 24 years old...and I said, “Our grandkids will be talking about the same issues we’re talking about in that class, because we are not going to solve that problem. You see how entrenched people are and where they are.” I said, “Our grandchildren will be talking about the same issues. We’re talking about equity, we’re talking about fairness, and we’re talking about paradigms and the ways in which people think...and who thinks it and they ways in which women have been constructed and the ways in which women’s knowledge has been deemed secondary. We’ll be talking about this for a while.”

Elle’s expectations looking ahead included doubt *and* optimism.

Are there issues in places in my institution right now where there are real and necessary opportunities for improving that as it relates to women? Absolutely. In this context, do I think it would happen? Probably not...[laughs]...you know, given its history and its origins and all of that. But, I can stay here because there is a space for a conversation about those things and ways for moving forward and advancing those pieces. And when I say no, I say not in my lifetime...let me put it that way...not in my lifetime or not in my service here where all things would be equal, but I think that in my lifetime I will see advancement for that...for those issues here.

### **Jenny’s Experience**

**Hostile work environment.** Jenny experienced hostility from her supervisors at several institutions. She was introduced to the notion of sexual harassment in the workplace at her very first job:

The president of the college at that time was really very, very...thinking back on that...really very 'handsy,' very sexual in nature, so I would...I was warned about that and would never be alone with him. He was very odd, and there was just this, you know, he was on a power trip...

At the same institution, Jenny experienced harassment from her supervisor:

I had a boss, a man, who was older, who absolutely harassed all the women in the office. Absolutely harassed them. Harassed them, harassed them, harassed them—sexually harassed them. Maybe he learned that from the president of the college, so I'm not sure, 'cause both of them were...when I think back on that, that was a freaking nightmare. Anyway, I reported him to HR. I said this is outrageous. Maybe that's why I never got the director's job, come to think of it. I'm sure that was retaliation for that because you know what the HR director said, "Well...he's old. He's going to retire." I go, "Are you *kidding* me with that?" How is that right that he's allowed to harass the women in the office, and you're telling me because he's old and going to retire that that's okay? So nothing was ever done. He was never spoken to.

As an associate director, Jenny described her supervisor as abusive. "She didn't want somebody who would buck her. She wanted to be large and in charge." Jenny offered evidence of her management style:

In the six years that I was there, sixty people left. *Sixty*. That's ten year. I know you can do the math...I'm just saying. *Sixty people*. There has to be a reason why that happened....that was one of *the* worst experiences I ever had in higher ed. *Ever*.

Many years later in the director's role, her associate vice president displayed outright hostility toward Jenny:

I guess I buried a little bit of this because it's a little painful. But he absolutely harassed women. Absolutely, and he... I will give you specific examples. One time, and I definitely feel that he harassed me, and so much so that I went to human resources not once but twice. I got called into a meeting in his office, and he had asked me to write something. I guess he didn't like the way I did it. He took the piece of paper...he was about 6'5" and I'm 5'2". I'm sitting down, he's standing up. I thought he was walking over to the table where I was seated to sit down. He *throws* the paper in my face. "*Look at this! This isn't what I wanted!*" And he's a towering figure. I was scared. I was scared, and it was all I could do to control myself and not start crying, 'cause I...I was scared and uh, just so angry, like how can you treat me like that?! I don't treat other people that way. And I don't expect to be treated that way. I absolutely think it was...women. That's how they treated them.

Referring to herself as a "whistle-blower," Jenny reported the abuse to Human Resources. "No matter what I did, it was never right. It wasn't good enough....Once he got rid of the dean—eliminated his position—then, I was just, you know...It was open-target season."

Even after she left this position, Jenny still suffered the wrath of this man. She received a phone call from her former secretary just over a month from the time she'd left.

She said, 'I need to talk to you,' and she called me at home. Never in the six years I worked there did she ever call me at home. I was like, oh my God, what's the



matter?! So, she said, “I need to talk to you.” She said, “Larry is talking about you. He’s defaming you...”

Jenny learned that one of her former staff members had been called down to the AVP’s office and was asked

...pointed questions about me and the two associate directors...like to kind of spill the beans on us...were we terrible, what did we do, what kind of leaders were we...? She was like “I don’t know you. I don’t owe you anything. They are good leaders, so I’m not sure what you’re asking me...” So, was he out to get me? *Oh, I’m sure of that.*

Jenny called a friend to get the name of a reliable attorney...”Cause he was saying the reason why he cleaned house, he got rid of me, was that I was terrible...I had mishandled funds, I had done blah, blah, blah, blah. I didn’t know what I was doing...”

Having enjoyed a good relationship with the university president, Jenny scheduled a meeting with her, taking the advice of a trusted colleague:

“You have a good relationship with her, and you left on good terms, and you need to make it clear to her what’s going on.” So, I called and arranged a meeting with the president of the university who, when I left, had been sick, and I didn’t get a chance to say goodbye to her. I went in. I said in no uncertain terms—*Here’s the situation*. I like it here. My daughter graduated from here. It was a very hard decision for me to leave...” [Jenny was shaking her head *no* as she said this] Not so hard. Not so hard. Not so hard, because I was like...I’m not living under this crap, and I said, “However, he’s speaking...He’s defaming me and not just within

the university but outside...two people that I know in the admissions community.” And I said, “If he doesn’t cease and desist, I’m going to sue you. I have a lawyer on retainer.” That was actually a threat. I didn’t, but I could have. And I didn’t have to actually come out and say I’m going to sue you because she’s a smart woman, and she knew what I meant. I said, “I do not want to take this any further, but I will.” Had a half hour meeting, and three times during that meeting I said the same thing. *“Here’s what he’s doing. You need to put an end to this, because he’s cleaned out this office. He doesn’t know what he’s doing. You’re the president of the university. You need to do something about it.”*

When I left, she got up and hugged me. She had tears in her eyes. She said to me, “I’m sorry. I’m sorry I could not help you, but I will help the people that are left.” And, unfortunately, it took a year, so maybe they were building a case during that year, and maybe they went back...I’d like to think that they went back and talked to HR about the things that I said, and the things I had documented...not just me, but people went to HR and had documentation, and they ended up firing him.

**Lack of power and support.** Jenny described ways in which the lack of support from her superiors prevented her from fulfilling her responsibilities as she thought she should. As a director, Jenny was stymied by her vice president.

He absolutely didn’t know anything about admissions. He came from a different region of the country and a community college system to Boston, which has, you know eighty colleges in and around the area. It’s a crowded market. Didn’t know anything about the school...anything about a private school education. Comes in

and absolutely restricts us in every single way. No, you can't go to this conference. No, you can't go to this. You can't present, you can't do this, you can't do that....After five years recruiting for [diversity outside of the U.S.], he goes, "Well, we're not going anymore." "Why? I've been doing it for now thirty years. *Why?* Give me a reason." "Well, we don't have the money..." *Really?!* 'Cause I have half a million dollar budget, and here's the line item, and nobody went over that.

Not only was another supervisor non-supportive, but also she was cunning and deceitful. She [the supervisor] was not real encouraging of moving ahead or getting involved or whatever. She was kind of advancing her own career and not really caring about the people who really worked for her. And I had an idea about having a college fair at the college through the state organization....She pitched the idea to the president as hers, and not only did she get credit for it, but she also got a bonus. Yeah! She looked out for herself along the way and didn't care how many bodies fell....I was there for six years and during that course of time, I had five directors....Her thing was if somebody doesn't like it here, they can leave, and we'll get someone to replace them. And that was pretty much a direct quote from her.

Jenny talked about how the manipulation of power can be used as a control mechanism to prevent or restrict the extent to which one can exercise any form of leadership. She described a scenario in which her supervisor ignored her role as director:

Here, I'm the senior associate director...have been there all this time...managed everybody. She promoted one of the assistant directors to associate director and

never discussed it with me. *Never*. And they all answered to me. Never talked to me about it. She talked to the male associate director about it. Not me. And I was the woman supervisor.

She described how standing versus sitting conveys power:

If you have something to say, come in the office and have a seat. Don't stand.

And what I would do if somebody did that to me, because the vice president used to do it, I would stand up. Now, we're on equal footing. I'm not going to sit while you're talking to me standing up.

Other subtle kinds of messages were also considered to be exclusion-by-power mechanisms, such as not being included in meetings or the removal of funding. Being snubbed also sends a message, and Jenny reflected on the notion that

...when colleges and universities were founded, the only people that were educated were men. The only people that were educated were White men, and I think there's a huge, strong foundation still in this country that perpetuates the advent and the promotion of White men. I'm sure White men...there are some that would disagree with that, but I think if you look at and think about the nation's oldest universities, right? Founded by men, and men went to them. When did women start going to schools?!

**The ultimate sacrifice.** After having dedicated her career to higher education, Jenny quit her director's job to take a position in college guidance at a high school. The rejection, hostility, and mistreatment were more than she was willing to tolerate, and the fear of losing her job forced her hand.

I try not to think about that too much because it does upset me. But I made a

conscious decision. It's hard. This year, it's easier. Last year was really hard. I closed the door on a thirty-year career. Did I do that consciously? I did. I did....I said I need a secure position where I'm not gonna get fired, and I can retire from it. And because I'm an assertive woman, and I've opened my mouth one too many times, in other people's opinions, not mine, it's gotten me in, you know, situations where I'm pretty sure I would have been fired. Because people sometimes don't want to hear the truth. They don't want to hear it. They like to live in a fantasy world with their own made up sense of the world. That's not what life's about, and you know what, at the end of the day, I have to live with myself. I have to look myself in the mirror and know that what I did was the right thing.

When asked why she left, Jenny replied,

I ended up leaving by my own choice because that to me was the lesser of two evils. Well, the other choice is I guess I could have stayed and fought. But my guess is I would have ended up...I would have ended up being fired. And why? Because I didn't subscribe to what this guy wanted? Thought as a vision? Never included me in what he thought should be, what we thought the vision for the office should be? No. I wasn't included in that. It was his way or the highway. And I'm saying...he was the hatchet man.

Jenny talked about managing and justifying the struggle over her career.

I know that I've done it more than once. Shut your mouth. Don't say anything because I need this position, and especially as a single parent, I know I did that more than once. Am I proud of that? No. And the times I was a whistle blower,

did that help me out? No. But it didn't stop me from doing what I thought was right. Even all those years later you know.... That was really hard and don't think I haven't regretted it. I did. I worked very hard.... Do I think that in this last case at the university that I did something for their greater good? I do. I do. I think that I did the right thing by going to HR and by blowing the whistle on him and talking to the president, because in the long run, they got rid of him. And now nobody else will have to suffer for that. That doesn't help that I had to go through that, or that other people in my office had to go through it. That doesn't change that fact. Did I choose to take an easier road by making the move? Yeah. For once in my life, *once in my life*, I thought about *myself* first and not about everybody else.

Jenny was asked how much of the trouble she faced she attributed to being a woman. "One Hundred percent. One hundred percent." About the job she left, she was asked if she believed if she were a man, would she still be there.

I'm sure I would still be there, or I would be in some other position in a university. There were times, you know, I applied for other jobs at other places. Now, I can't swear that it was because I was a woman that I was passed over, but when they hire a man, that's usually a pretty strong sign that they wanted a man, not a woman.

When asked if she had given up the fight, she conceded. "I can't do it. I'm not going to..."

### **Linda's Experience**

**Favoritism.** One of the greatest obstacles Linda described facing as a leader was

favoritism of males and the privileged treatment they received. According to Linda, this favoritism was evident in the expectations around performance standards but was also manifest in many other ways. Women are expected to do more, men less, they're coddled for it, and women pay the price.

It is blatant favoritism in our morning meetings where I am the only female—the rest are all males. The 'executive round table'—it's "Oh, *thank you*, John. *Oh, oh*," you know. And if I say something, it's an attack, or it's a challenge, but then when we get into our one-on-ones in private it's, "Oh, *you know*, I couldn't do anything without you..." [*exaggerated*]

Linda faced difficulty in negotiating her contract to move from a leadership position at one institution into her current role. She was giving up tenure and tried to negotiate that but to no avail. "We'll let you teach," she was told. She learned something interesting after she had arrived.

Well, when I got here apparently...and the faculty didn't know this by the way...the administration had given the deans, males, automatic tenure...that they hired new. And the faculty didn't know this nor did the faculty have any say in that. But they did negotiate that for them. They gave them parking passes. They had given me a parking pass, too...that was the final thing. I was here one month, and they took it away. I went and said you can't do that. I have it in a letter. So they paid for the parking for one year, and then they put that pay on my base salary, so they said that covered it. You heard me...

As it would turn out, not one of the deans was currently still in place. "Well, now...funny thing...those deans were all unsuccessful...They did horrible jobs....So

how did they get rid of them? They put them into the faculty. Not a one of them has as much teaching experience as I have.” So, Linda saw this as having had to fight for, and not even receive, her due, while the males landed safely and comfortably on their feet after having been ousted from their assigned roles.

For Linda, male favoritism was evident and played out in power differentials between women and men.

When we put budget requisitions in, I’m always the one who gets my budget cut, even though I have more areas than everybody. But, we’ll protect the male budget areas. In fact, we give the male budget authority. The only thing I ask for every year is I need to understand the budget process. I finally understood the budget process when she made the other person of my title in charge of the budget. So it’s very interesting. And we know wherever the money is, is where the power is. Surprised to somewhat understand that Linda didn’t have control over her own budget, she was asked about that:

...only to a very low level. In other words, I still have to go up to get another signature. Even the people who report to me, I have to still send that up to get another signature, where the men don’t have to do that. All of the men who work there, they have full budget capacity. [*long pause*] I’m retiring early. [*laughs*]

Linda described her experience of male favoritism from women: “I think that there’s blatant favoritism, and the favoritism is overwhelming, and I bet you they don’t even see it...the women. They don’t even see it.” Surprisingly, Linda saw her own face in the mirror:

I remember reading something back in the early 90s about how women



still...female professors still call on men more frequently than females or push them more to get the right answer. I said, now that's ridiculous. So I had myself video-taped for a full week. I was doing it! *I was doing it!!* I called on them equally even if they didn't have their hand up, but I *pushed* the men more to get the right answer. Or like...*I was doing that!* [laughs] Like I said, I didn't totally call on males, but I was pushing that a little bit more. I think there are some things that we don't even realize that need to be called to our attention.

Despite the fact that Linda was aware of and very sensitive to the equal treatment of women and men, she had somehow internalized that they are to be treated differently based on their gender. A big difference is that she cared enough to explore that in herself and, subsequently, to change that behavior.

**Retaliation.** Linda's experience reflected that, as a woman leader, there were definite boundaries that should not be crossed, and she saw that the rules differed based on gender. In trying to do the right thing, Linda sought a balance between doing what was right and protecting herself.

There's always a thin line. It bothers me, but if I ever try to point it out [differential treatment], I get in a lot of trouble. And I have pointed it out to my supervisors where I had received numerous complaints about my male colleague in the same role for months...maybe 15 significant complaints came my way, and I kept saying what would you like me to *do??* So I thought it was my obligation. I wrestled with this, and I tried to tell her these things. I got *nailed*. *Decimated for it!* [slams hand on table] And I said I will *never* say one word about this person again. Don't ask me. Don't. 'Cause every once in a while she would hint because

she knew these things were coming up.

So, Linda learned, in no uncertain terms, a bit more about where that line was that was not to be crossed.

Linda observed fear of retaliation in other female employees during an open forum on diversity and inclusion. She was the highest ranking individual in the room, and to hear the concerns of the other employees, mostly women, was of deep concern to her. The women were “afraid to speak up [and said] they’re afraid...over and over again.” Linda said, “*It’s 2013!*” I thought this was...everyone knew you should [speak up], but they were afraid of retaliation, afraid of this...afraid...it just amazes me that that’s still there.” Linda followed by explaining to them how to handle such a situation and added,

...I feel it’s very important in my role to tell all the people who report to me that if you have any kind of situation where you see a violation in the code of conduct or if you feel like there’s harassment or hostility, you report it to me. I will investigate and will *not* retaliate in any way for this. And I can’t tell you how many people said they hadn’t ever heard that before.

It was as though the women needed permission to speak up and had never been given that permission. Linda suggested that a male-dominated environment might be setting that tone.

Linda experienced retaliation for being more competent than two of her male and female superiors:

I was attending the Board of Trustees meetings for numerous months, especially the academic one, for about a year and giving reports on data, assessment data, the self-study process, following up, and I had to give a presentation to the entire

board. My boss did [too], who's the senior vice president, and then the president [was to present]. I gave the presentation, and, you know, I'm a teacher, that's what I did for all these years. You know how to give a presentation. So I gave the presentation, and the Board was there, and then the next presentation, and then the president's presentation, and several of them [board members] started..."Well, we understood Dr. Linda's presentation. That was wonderful...[but] we didn't understand what the hell you other two were saying," and I was thinking, I'm going to pay for this.

"You're going to pay for this?" she was asked. "Yeah...and guess what? That was the *last* Board of Trustees meeting I've been invited to." The researcher gasped. There was a long silence, then Linda began laughing. "So, you know, it's a fine line that you have to walk."

**Reward, recognition, and promotion.** Linda acknowledged her belief that women are penalized for being competent and described herself as an example:

I think people do know of my abilities and that I'm a good worker wherever I go. However, I think that that intimidates people, and I still think a woman who's fairly outspoken, who has a Ph.D., who lives by herself...how it frightens...they're still *hanging* those women in Salem...those *witches*!...[laughs] I think not recognizing peoples' work...It's amazing to me, because people are so appreciative, and I've heard it numerous times..."You thanked your staff for the work...Thank you so much for doing that..." [??!!] I believe that you do that. I don't care who it is...male, female... whoever's working, if the job is good, it's good. It is clearly, *clearly* the males who get more

recognition. Or those who will prescribe to...the women who prescribe to [the male agenda].

Linda described the environment:

Well...it's tough...It's just...It's such a web! We don't want to say the "old boys' network," but the old boys' network still exists! It's alive and well, and the web includes *women*, and a lot of women who get ahead become part of the old boys' network, and I find that disappointing in so many ways....But, if I as a woman would tell another woman, sometimes that doesn't work out too well. Like if I were to tell my boss, you know you're really showing favoritism, I'd get my *head* beat in.

In terms of recognition, Linda talked about how outsiders congratulated her for her hard work on the accreditation review, but, internally, the recognition wasn't there.

I'm asked to go to other schools. I'm key note speaker...never once has that been presented to the Board or published when I do anything like that. It's very strange. It's very strange. And as my reward for doing a good job through the self-study...The executive assistant who's about 24, he got a one-hundred-dollar gift card. [*pause*] And so did I! [*laughs*] So, there are things you have to...it's very difficult to always determine if it's your individual personality and character or if it's gender, but there are certain instances when I can see the gender. I can see it with the responsibilities I have. I have seen it with promotions. I have seen it with the lack of recognition, expectations...that kind of thing.

Surely, Linda has been promoted but was discriminated against at the same time.

At her former institution, when assessment issues were bubbling up, they needed to put

someone in charge to address the concerns.

So he, of course...there were 300 [faculty], and they needed a faculty leader. So, he comes and picks me. But it was really hard work that I had to do. [laughs] So, I became the coordinator there, and when we needed a dean, then, of course, I was asked immediately to do it. But I left the deanship and went back to the faculty, because they wouldn't give me the money that the other deans made. I said, "But I worked here longer than all of these people," but *no*! So, I just went back to my faculty position.

So, Linda left a deanship to return to the faculty. All but one of the other deans was male. All of the deans were paid more than she was, and she sacrificed her role as a result of the neglect of the administration to recognize her level and compensate her equally. Once again, she was morally forced to abandon her position.

Linda told an interesting story about promotion that had occurred recently:

It was interesting this summer a whole unit—all males—all males. We weren't supposed to have any promotions or salary increases. Came back and guess what? This whole group had all become assistant vice president level! Over night! All males! And people were upset..."Oh, we just did it to make their positions equivalent with other..."

Linda interrupted herself.

Assistant vice president of *Grounds*?? I don't think so...[laughs]...So, it's just...this kind of stuff goes on outside of a system. I can't handle it. Every example I've seen, it's males. I don't see this...It's wrong either way in my opinion, but it just happened! Overnight!

Linda gave another example of male preference with regard to hiring patterns as well. “We just hired the same level as I am...Associate Vice President of Alumni Affairs with a *bachelor’s* degree. I had to have a Ph.D. Interesting....Males who put the position through like that, and a male got hired.” “What about bringing any of this to the attention of the decision-makers?” she was asked. “I have. I have.” [*hesitation*] “But for a price?” was the next question. “Yes. Yes. *Oh*, yes.”

**Women against women.** Early on in the interview, after Linda described how she was challenged (by her female boss), who praised the men, she tiredly revealed,

This is my life every day. This is my life every day. And it takes its toll. It really does take its toll. And so I see this, and I think what hurts me more is the people who have treated...were hardest on me were other *women*! And that is what I still can’t get over. I just don’t understand that. And I worked for two...I worked for the top woman for many years. She was *hard*. Hard core.

When asked why she thought women had been harder on her, she responded,

Some of them might think, “I had to go through this, so you’re going to have to go through that, too.” That’s something I’ve fought all along. Just because you had to go through things that were hard doesn’t mean that the next group should have to. I don’t agree with that philosophy at all. But, I think that’s prevalent. I think that’s prevalent in so many ways. And so I think that might be the number one reason. That’s stupid to me. [*laughs*] I just don’t get that. I just don’t get that. I do see that, and I do think that people say, “I had to be treated that way, so we’ll make other people...here’s *your* comeuppance! You have to pay your dues. You have to go through this...”

In summary, there is no smooth or easy path for women leaders.

**Male-dominated leadership.** Linda described a male-dominated culture shrouded in secrecy that excludes women and leads in inappropriate ways:

I was thinking about it...the preparation for this and the meeting I was at before...

I kept thinking about this with the Pope. That analysis of how Frances has got some work to do here...because what happened...as in any big organization, secrecy and a lack of transparency can cause problems. So that's happened. How many...? We have all these *men*! Running the *show*! Keeping it *insular*! Think about Penn State. What's the problem there? It's a whole bunch of *men*! I just...it's that secrecy. It's that protection, and I think, myself as a person and as a female with a certain ability, that threatens that secrecy and lack of transparency. Why don't we just tell each other what the problem is??? Let's just...[laughs]

In the higher education setting, Linda stated that she thought public institutions were held to greater accountability, and with privates,

...that's where a big change has to occur. There's a lot more opportunity for secrecy. Oh, we'll check the box. Yes, we have a Title IX officer...We're going to have these two middle-aged White men go around and talk to everybody about...you, you, you can't do that! But it happens. *It happens*. I guess there's not the check-and-balance system, so, I think there's a lot more pressure from the government now than there ever was before and that regulations for certain things...we have to now make sure we're much more open. I think it's a positive move in some ways. Get rid of all this stuff and start working towards it.

As a female leader in higher education, Linda expressed disappointment at the outcomes: I think about it every day. I do. And it's a shame because I gave my whole life to higher education....It's demoralizing. It's exhausting. It used to be very, very depressing, and I used to feel unsure. Now, I no longer question myself. I feel that I'm seeing clearly. *[laughs]* I went through all of that. I think I'm at a stage where I can see. And I do...I pick my battles. I'm not going to fight every one of them. I do pick my battles, and I will go forth for as long as I can, and I'll try to be the role model, and I'll try to support women, but...I don't know. I don't know. I hope that if women would get to higher positions where they could illustrate a different kind of leadership style, then, maybe things would change.

### **Gender and Organizations**

Ely and Padavic (2007) proposed a theory that sex differences which have been observed within organizations are not the result of gender per se but are the result of gendered expectations of women and men in the workplace. They describe the “socially embedded nature of gender” (Ely & Padavic, 2007, p. 1123) and regard organizations as catalysts in shaping these gendered differences. According to Ely and Padavic, “gender-appropriate behavior is enforced via social arrangements and interactions at work” (p. 1124), and their focus is on processes that result in these differences. They view gender as a social system, and femininity and masculinity are components of this system and represent values, experiences, and meaning that are associated with women and men. Expectations around masculinity and femininity result in differing expectations for women and men at work, and the gendering of occupations contributes to the sustenance



of these roles. It is the organization, though, that is delimiting and endorsing expected behavior, and workers behave accordingly. “Through organizational structures and practices, culturally available stereotyped images and narratives are—or are not—written into scripts for use by organizational members” (Ely & Padavic, 2007, p. 1133). In essence, the differences are a result of the culture and not directly of gender.

This is exactly what Elle was saying:

So, if I’m in a leadership position, and it’s the culture here to be oppressive to women, just because I’m a woman doesn’t mean that I’m going to change that. It doesn’t mean that I’m not going to be oppressive.

It also mirrors what Jenny and Linda shared about the abuse and disrespect they received from other women. If the culture calls for a particular type of behavior, that behavior will be enacted regardless of whether it’s a man or a woman doing it and regardless of whether it’s expected or accepted from one sex or the other.

Along the same lines, Ely and Padavic (2007) discuss “organizational demography” (p. 1136) relative to the representation of women and men in various roles. If it is generally accepted that men do a certain type of work and women another, then that will be what is expected of each sex. The positions of women and men along hierarchical lines within an organization will also set the standard for who has power and authority and who does not. They suggest, however, that power is linked to structure and gender to power and that men have the advantage here. Gender and power are also linked culturally and are reflected in cultural hierarchies that also favor males. These features are present in the workplace and dictate appropriate roles and behaviors for women and men. With regard to stereotypes, Ely and Padavic suggest that organizational inattention

allows stereotypes to prevail, so, again, it's the organization that's creating the difference.

These observations and conclusions are consistent with Elle's, Jenny's, and Linda's experiences when they referred to the norms that existed and how they simply weren't questioned—by either the men or the women. The culture says it's this way, and everyone agrees and acts accordingly, and when the women behaved in a way that opposed what was expected, for that they all paid a price.

### **Conclusion**

The first research question was intended to address the ways in which women experience conflict between gender roles and leadership roles and associated stereotypes in the higher education environment. Based on Elle's, Jenny's, and Linda's experiences, there was much evidence that these women, as leaders, were behaving in ways that countered the gender-role stereotype of a woman, and they were, indeed, conflicted by it. The female stereotype is one that represents women as submissive, indecisive, apologetic, emotional, and subordinate and connotes them as sex objects. As women and as leaders, these women didn't behave or respond according to their gender-role stereotype creating discomfort in others and leading them to question themselves. They described the self-doubt, confusion, and gendered expectations they faced, acknowledging, too, that there is a double standard which distinguishes what is acceptable for a woman versus what is acceptable for a man. When exercising their authority or expertise, they were viewed as threatening or ignored and were left wondering if and how they were not good enough. Being a strong female leader is not rewarded, and they were reminded that they were not considered to be equal to their male counterparts. Their ways of leading were inconsistent with the traditional modes of leadership and were not valued, and their values of

inclusion and respect were overridden by the status quo mentality. A great challenge for them as leaders was that they were viewed as women first and were treated accordingly.

The second research question asked specifically about the ways that the incongruity between the female stereotype and the leader stereotype diminishes opportunities for women to assume leadership roles. This kind of a scenario had varying impacts on Elle, Jenny, and Linda. Most obviously, they simply weren't hired or promoted when advancement opportunities were presented to them. Jenny was passed over for promotions on numerous occasions despite her abundant qualifications, and Linda was overlooked in favor of a man. When Linda and Elle realized they would be able to go no further, they simply quit their jobs to seek opportunities elsewhere. The imposition of double standards coupled with a desire to maintain the status quo put them in an unfavorable light, and others, often males, were selected as final candidates for new opportunities and promotions despite their lesser qualifications.

Their strength was misconstrued, and all three women were kept in their place—held back—by others, both men and women, who viewed them as threatening and intimidating. Their behavior was judged harshly and criticized, and a culture of male dominance considered them to be subordinate. The good old boys' network worked to their disadvantage, as the male culture dominated the decision-making processes. The existing structures and practices promoted males' ways of thinking, and women joined the old boys' network and treated other women in similar ways. In terms of advancement and leadership opportunities, all three women experienced the subtle and not-so-subtle messages that their gender made them unsuitable for leadership.

The third and final research question was directed at identifying obstacles that

created additional barriers for women in leadership roles in the higher education setting, and there were many. Perhaps most blatant and offensive was the mistreatment the women described in terms of outright discrimination, hostility in the workplace, and, for Jenny in particular, the threat of defamation of character. Linda described very uncomfortable bouts of retaliation, and all three women described circumstances in which they were not given credit where credit was due.

Linda and Jenny talked about how the fear of losing their jobs was a reality for them, and all three of them—Elle included—mentioned the consideration of job security as a factor when deciding whether to leave or to stay. Linda and Jenny talked about being fearful in terms of job security, and Jenny was fearful of her supervisors. This fear and insecurity created situations for them such that they dealt with issues of compromise and sacrifice regularly. For Jenny, it meant giving up a thirty-year career. Being in a leadership position but lacking certain levels of power and authority also put all three women in a precarious position. In this dominant-male setting was evidence of favoritism and the devaluing of women's contributions to the extent that the women questioned themselves and lacked the support of those around them.

Unfortunately, the answers to all three research questions are not uncommon with regard to women and leadership, and women in higher education face similar concerns and obstacles when seeking and enacting leadership roles. The reality and implications of this are discussed in the closing chapter.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion**

This qualitative study was designed to explore the ways in which stereotypes impact opportunities for and performance in leadership roles for women in higher education administration. It was situated in the context of Eagly and Karau's (2002) role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders which states that women cannot also be leaders because the stereotypes of the two are incongruous. This incongruity results in a prejudice against women leaders who consequently will experience reduced access to leadership roles and will face greater obstacles as they enact those roles. Three women leaders in higher education administration were interviewed, and the interviews were analyzed in response to three research questions aimed at exploring the conflict they experienced and the obstacles they faced based on their perceptions of gender prejudice and stereotyping. This chapter discusses the findings as they relate to common themes in the literature as well as Eagly and Karau's role congruity theory. It concludes with limitations of the study, implications for future research, and implications for practice.

### **Introduction**

This study sought answers to three research questions:

- In what ways do women in higher education experience conflict between gender and leadership roles and associated stereotypes?
- In what ways does the incongruity between gender and leader roles diminish opportunities for women to assume leadership positions?
- In what ways does this incongruity create additional obstacles for women in leadership roles?

The underlying assumption was that, indeed, women are subject to and feel the ramifications of stereotyping regularly. This turned out to be the case for Elle, Jenny, and Linda. When addressing leadership in particular, Elle's experience was that if the culture is gendered and the norm is to treat people in gendered ways, then stereotyping and its resultant oppression would happen "all the time." When Jenny was asked if she had encountered situations in which the expectation of her response was tainted with stereotypes and gender-based assumptions, her response was, "Oh...that's been everywhere." Likewise, Linda's experience over many years and even currently was that there are gender-based differences, and they are manifested in various ways including recognition, promotion, reward, and favoritism. She sums up her experience by saying, "I think about it every day....and it's a shame..."

The presence of gender and leadership stereotypes was confirmed throughout their answers to the interview questions and examples of their lived experiences. These encounters not only created conflict for the women but also reduced their access to and performance in leadership roles.

### **Stereotypes**

Stereotypes are generalizations used to prejudge, categorize, and make sense of behaviors and situations. According to Allport (1954), individuals are judged based on the expectations of their group, and stereotypes impact what we see, how we judge, and how we respond to these groups. Gender and leader stereotypes delineate very specific behaviors that are expected and accepted of women and men. Women are expected to be passive, emotional, kind, nurturing, and indecisive, while leaders (and men) are expected to be aggressive, bold, strong, and decisive.

All three women conveyed that they were viewed first as women, and, for Elle, she added that she was first viewed based on racial stereotypes and secondly as a woman. All three women experienced situations where they were viewed in stereotypical ways and were expected to respond accordingly. Elle was expected to stay in her place and maintain a subordinate role within her department, while she watched the female associate dean make coffee and take minutes at meetings. Jenny was told she couldn't wear pants to work—that she had to wear a dress, and because Linda wasn't married with children, her male co-workers assumed she was gay. Again, all three women talked about how it's always the woman who takes the minutes at the meetings, makes the coffee, or buys that birthday card. Jenny and Linda shared lessons-learned about women being viewed as sexual objects. They emphasized that it's necessary for women to take that into consideration in the workplace and to dress and behave in ways to avoid be viewed in a sexual way. Biernat's (2003) conclusion that individuals are judged based on the expectations associated with their group, and that stereotypes serve as the standard against which this judgment takes place, is evident based on Elle's, Jenny's, and Linda's experiences.

Prescriptive stereotypes, describing how individuals are *supposed* to behave, have a negative impact on women who are also leaders, as the leadership behavior is inconsistent with what is expected of them because they are women (Heilman, 2001). Indeed, all three women who were interviewed experienced harsh judgment and criticism as they enacted their leadership roles. They had each experienced a twist on the perception of their leadership behavior and described being perceived as threatening and intimidating instead of strong and decisive, and they were criticized instead of rewarded

as a result. Evidence of stereotyping and the expectation of commensurate behavior was described by Jenny as she discussed her hesitancy to show emotion: “*Oh*, you’re being just like a *woman*.” For Elle, the gendered culture made it clear that “there were very gendered expectations of what you would do even in those [leadership] roles.” Retaliation is something Linda experienced quite often, and the lesson there was, “...it’s a fine line that you have to walk...”

Stereotyping can also result in a wearing-away of one’s aspirations, effort, and personality (Campbell, 1967), and this reaction from the women was present, although more so for Jenny and Linda, who are older and have worked for a longer period of time than Elle. When reflecting on her career, Linda stated, “....it’s exhausting. It used to be very, very depressing, and I used to feel unsure. Now, I no longer question myself....[but] I pick my battles.” When Jenny was asked about her decision to walk away from her thirty-year career and her willingness to continue the fight, she responded, “I can’t do it. I’m not going to...”

Broverman et al. (1972) discussed how gender roles can impact self-concept, and it was evident that all three women struggled with identity issues as a result of negative feedback they received for what they considered to be strong, assertive behavior, yet, simply put, appropriate behavior. While considering their behavior to be acceptable, others’ criticism and lack of approval created insecurities for them. They engaged in identity management reflecting on how women must be careful in presenting themselves due to negative stereotypes based on intellectual capacity and emotional stability along with concerns of being viewed as sexual objects. Jenny was often put in situations where she questioned herself: “...I was never good enough, right enough...” Linda noticed a



difference in how she was treated in comparison to her male colleagues and questioned what was happening: "...it's difficult to always determine if it's your individual personality and character or if it's gender, but there are certain instances when I can see the gender." Elle navigated the path of stereotyping offering that she was very "conscious of...how I frame things." The mixed messages the women received as they asserted their strength in enacting their leadership roles caused them to consider their gender as an explanation for the varying responses to their behavior.

Each of the women experienced conflict resulting from perceived gender stereotypes, as their behavior as leaders was inconsistent with what was expected of them. Stereotypes carry over into the workplace and set standards for acceptable behavior, and differences are evident in what each of the sexes may demonstrate (as cited in Heilman, 1995). The reality that women are viewed first in the context of the gender role combined with the expectation that their behavior be consistent with it created obstacles for them. They questioned themselves and struggled with others' reactions to their leadership, particularly in light of the fact that men could behave in ways that they could not.

### **Women and Work**

The literature on women in the workplace provides evidence that women are discriminated against, and this discrimination can take on several forms. Sex-role stereotyping in its most fundamental state results in women being preferred for feminine roles, while men are preferred for masculine-type roles (Davison & Burke, 2000), and masculine traits are more highly valued than feminine traits (Glick, 1991). Since leadership is characterized as a male role (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001), women

are immediately faced with a challenge in that—simply stated—they are women. A lack of fit (Heilman, 2001) is perceived due to prescriptive stereotypes when women step outside of their gender role and enact leadership behaviors, and perceivers are likely to disapprove.

This lack of fit was experienced by the study participants, and they were subject to the disapproval of their supervisors. Elle felt as though she was put in her place when she offered her expertise, while Jenny and Linda suffered from hostility and retaliation when executing their responsibilities. Displaying assertiveness can result in backlash for women (Rudman & Glick, 2001), and this is exactly what had occurred. Retaliation was a theme for Linda, and the hostility that Jenny was subjected to led her to file complaints with the human resources office on more than one occasion. Taking the degree of hostility even further, Jenny was victimized, as her former supervisor engaged in defamation of character in his attempts to discredit her. These experiences had negative personal and professional consequences for the women, and Heilman's (2001) assessment of the outcome of stereotyping was apparent in their reactions. Elle, Linda, and Jenny perceived that their work and performance were devalued, they were not given credit where credit was due, and their success was undermined by criticism and lack of support.

As these women enacted their leadership roles—stepped outside of their gender role—they were judged harshly, criticized, and perceived that a double standard was also at work which elevated the performance and contributions of males while devaluing what they as women had to offer. Foschi's (1996) study confirmed a double standard for performance evaluation between women and men, with women at a disadvantage. Males

operate with an advantage, as the standard for identifying a lack of competence is lower for them, while women must work harder than men to demonstrate their ability (Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997). These scenarios played out for Elle, Jenny, and Linda, creating conflict and feelings of diminished power (Gutek et al., 1996) while tainting the perception and evaluation of their performance as leaders.

To manage the perception of herself, Elle calculated her responses to others, seeking a balance between her own desired behavior and the stereotypes she suspected were in play. Knowing that the multiple stereotypes she lived with daily could impact the perceptions of her work and her leadership, stereotype threat (Steele, 1997) was the vehicle that often directed her responses. While having no reservations about her ability, stereotype threat interfered with Elle's ability and willingness to respond in a spontaneous and natural manner. Likewise, Jenny was hesitant to display emotion so as not to be perceived "like a woman." According to Rudman (1998), having to choose when or when not to behave in certain ways based on the perceived expectations of others can create doubt as well as reinforce the female gender stereotype.

A male-dominated work environment was also a theme which created obstacles for the study participants. Elle's take on the culture was that male domination overshadowed and devalued women's contributions, but this way of knowing and being in the environment was so embedded in everyday life that there was little or no recognition that women were excluded and discriminated against. The culture dictated the ways in which leaders were expected to behave, and the norm was to treat people in gendered ways. Oppression against women was so common that it was not visible to the oppressors. The oppressors, by the way—according to all three women—could be men or

women, and Elle described this as women's ways of fitting into the culture in order to gain acceptance.

Bielby (2000) called attention to "systemic" sources of discrimination that are built into the organization and embedded so deeply that they are overlooked. Buzzanell's (2004) work described the environment similarly where such behavior is taken for granted and is thus sustained, and Bobbitt-Zeher's (2011) narrative study uncovered the fact that the experience of women in the work place was that they were viewed first as women and secondly as workers. This gendered lens also minimized the authority and power that Elle, Jenny, and Linda could exert, and Davey (2008) confirmed that maintaining these gendered differences in organizations separates those who have power and control and those who do not. Gaining success meant that women must behave like men despite that fact that they would be viewed negatively as a result.

The presence of stereotypes in the workplace impacted how Elle, Jenny, and Linda were viewed and behaved and continually reminded them of their gender. They navigated their roles as leaders carefully. Their perception was one of gendered organizations in which standards were set and although invisible, they created boundaries for acceptable leadership behavior. The women experienced these obstacles both as they sought opportunities for leadership and as they enacted their leadership roles. Their experiences were consistent with Acker's (1990) findings that organizations are gendered resulting in differences between women and men with regard to opportunity, power and control, participation, and identity.

### **Women and Leadership**

The incongruity between gender and leadership stereotypes resulted in oppression

and lack of upward mobility (Campbell, 1967) for Elle, Jenny, and Linda. All three women were denied the opportunity for promotion, and oppression was a common theme, with the environment and their treatment described as “demoralizing,” “gender-biased,” and “male-centered.” The women’s experiences mirrored what Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) described such that men have held leadership positions for so long, they have set the norm for what defines a leader. Coupled with that was the fact that these women were perceived as having less expertise and knowledge than their male counterparts (Carli, 2001). Jenny was constantly overlooked for promotions as she watched men become the chosen ones, and Elle and Linda’s expertise was ignored in favor of that of the male majority. With regard to leadership, the male gender role is consistent with leader attributes, while the female gender role is not. But according to Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001), this can play out differently in different organizations. Mitigating factors include the context of the leader role, whether or not the female stereotype has been activated, and the strength of the belief systems of the followers with regard to traditional gender roles.

For Elle, Jenny, and Linda, however, the male-dominated environment made gender salient and placed and kept men in positions of authority, and these factors combined to influence and maintain a culture of male dominance and tradition. It seemed that a preference for male leadership was in place along with a preference that women remain in their gender-appropriate roles. Displaying leadership behavior put the women at risk and at a disadvantage. Rudman and Glick (2001) stated that, “women who strive for leadership positions are in a double bind: They can enact communal behaviors and be liked but not respected or enact agentic behaviors and be respected but not liked” (p.

744). Indeed, the women were treated disrespectfully generally, but it seemed as though they also were *not* treated with respect when behaving in an agentic fashion. In their setting, the agentic behavior displayed by the women did not earn them points.

Furthermore, evidence of their competence worked to their disadvantage as well, which is described succinctly by Butler and Geis (1990): “For women, it appears that simply offering a substantive contribution is enough to elicit others’ displeasure” (p. 54).

Leadership barriers for Elle, Jenny, and Linda included the old boys’ network, a lack of fit between expected behavior and enacted behavior, stereotyping, a lack of opportunity for visibility, and a male-dominated culture. For Jenny in particular, her ability to do her job was viewed as compromised due to the fact that she was married and had children to raise, while Linda faced other stereotypes because she wasn’t married and had no children to attend to. In terms of visibility, Jenny’s idea was stolen, and her supervisor presented it as her own, and Linda was never recognized internally for her hard work and achievements. A lack of fit resulted in retaliation toward them, and their authority was continually put in jeopardy. Consistent with the research findings of Biernat and Danaher (2012) and Davies, Spencer, and Steele (2005), all three women experienced a lowering of their leadership aspirations due to the negative impacts of gender and leadership stereotyping.

Double standards also cost the women the price of recognition and appreciation for their leadership ability and effectiveness. Women must be both strong and sensitive to be considered effective leaders (Johnson et al., 2008), but they pay the price for being both. A female leader who is sensitive violates the leader stereotype, and one who is strong violates the gender stereotype. Elle, Jenny, and Linda were aware of this paradox

for women, and for Elle in particular was also the awareness that men need only be strong. These findings are consistent with the research of Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky (1992) which demonstrated that women are held to a double standard that requires exceptional display of capability, while, at the same time, they are not recognized for their accomplishments.

Despite the fact that women have been identified as displaying a more transformational leadership style (Bass et al., 1996) and that this leadership style has been linked to effective leadership (Judge & Piccolo, 2004), enacting this kind of leadership did not benefit the study participants. Elle, Jenny, and Linda spoke to the need to treat individuals with respect, to include them, and to make them feel valued. While this behavior of compassion and kindness is stereotypically feminine, it did not bring recognition to their efforts or beliefs. Contrary to research described by Eagly and Karau (2002), leading in this gender-consistent fashion was not rewarded. Given that successful leadership is considered to be context-specific (Eagly et al., 1995), the male-dominated culture and tradition of excluding women could very well be at the core of the women's failed attempts at receiving commensurate recognition for their work and their leadership.

In summary, the presence and consequences of stereotypes not only obscured opportunities for Elle, Jenny, and Linda but also hindered their ability to assume leadership roles and to be successful in those roles. The discord between the expected behavior of women and of leaders in a male-dominated setting undermined what they were able to accomplish and altered the ways in which they managed themselves, viewed their work, and, ultimately, told their stories.

## **Women in Higher Education**

The literature on women's experiences in higher education describes a culture dominated by masculine tradition and preconceived notions of leadership (Twombly & Rosser, 2002). In this environment, women are expected to work within the boundaries of these accepted norms which have become embedded into the fabric of the institution (Eagly & Carli, 2007) and which also create roadblocks to their acceptance and mobility within the existing structures (Twombly & Rosser, 2002). These themes are reflected clearly in Elle's, Jenny's, and Linda's stories as they struggled to attain the recognition for their leadership that they saw afforded to their White male counterparts. The women's ways of leading, which involved inclusion, respect, and communication, were disregarded in favor of the status quo, and they faced obstacles in their attempts at promotion, when, ultimately, men were the preferred candidates for positions. In summary, their experiences were consistent with Bilimoria, Joy, and Liang's (2008) findings that women perceive the higher education climate to be sexist, disrespectful, non-supportive, and intolerant in its treatment of women.

Unfortunately, Jenny's and Linda's experiences in particular were much harsher as they were subjected to hostility, retaliation, and discrimination. Chun and Evans (2008) observed that women must tread lightly in order not to be perceived in an unfavorable way and that female administrators must respond carefully in order not to arouse resistance. Jenny and Linda stepped outside of these boundaries and paid the price for doing so. All three women, at one point in their careers, actually had to quit their jobs because they had reached a point where they were completely immobilized. Elle left her faculty role seeing no opportunities for women in that particular environment; Linda



stepped down from a deanship due to a dispute around equal pay, and Jenny quit her job as director and ended a thirty-year career in higher education. These are quite severe consequences which, according to the women, had very much to do with their gender. Research on women in higher education (Mason et al., 2005; van Anders, 2004) confirms that women leave for various reasons including failure to be promoted, limitations on mobility, and an unfriendly academic environment. The work of Dominici et al. (2009) confirmed the theme that female leaders were not recognized to the extent that male leaders were and that they were respected less than their male colleagues.

The literature also confirms the presence of multiple stereotypes for female minorities (as cited in Madden, 2005), which Elle clearly articulated, as well as the existence of multiple layers of discrimination (Benokraitis, 1998). All three layers of discrimination—blatant, subtle, and covert—were evident in the women's stories. Blatant discrimination, obvious in its manifestation, was described by Jenny and Linda and took the form of retaliation, unequal pay, and failure to be promoted. Examples of subtle discrimination, less obvious in its display, were shared and described as being excluded from meetings and decision-making and being looked upon in gendered ways as the nurturer and caretaker, the one who makes the coffee and takes the minutes. Jenny was a victim of covert discrimination, described as outright sabotage, when her former supervisor defamed and discredited her.

Benokraitis (1998) further distinguishes four levels of subtle sex discrimination—individual, organizational, institutional, and cultural—and states that women can face multiple layers of these subtle forms of discrimination. Indeed they did. Individual discrimination reflects differential treatment of women, and this was a theme for all three

study participants. Exclusion is a form of organizational discrimination where certain groups are not invited to participate, while institutional discrimination represents the expectation that men and women remain in certain types of roles. These themes were also echoed in Elle's, Jenny's, and Linda's stories. Finally, cultural discrimination can take the form of differences in funding for initiatives, or, as an example, in the way that Linda was not given authority over her budget, while the male AVPs were. Subtle discrimination is particularly elusive because it often goes unnoticed, as these behaviors have become internalized as part of the culture. While subtle, their overall and cumulative effects serve to reduce and undermine women's ability to assume and to assert leadership.

All three women referred to the "old boys' network," described in detail by Farr (1988):

They are White, upper- (or upper middle-) class men in their productive adult years with established informal networks through which instrumental favors are exchanged and barriers to inclusion are erected. They are unified through chauvinistic, class, and local traditions that afford them "insider" privileges. [This union serves] to reinforce their perceptions of themselves as gender and class elites." (p. 264)

All three women described the oppression they experienced in the culture of their institutions which was dominated by this White male privilege which excluded women, devalued their work, and created barriers for them as leaders. According to Farr, this network is one way that White men control and manage their positions of power, and Acker (1990) suggests that the gendering of organizations has resulted in domination and

power that rests in their hands. Combined with this White male privilege are gender stereotypes which create social hierarchies lessening women's positions and creating obstacles for them (Ridgeway, 2001). Elle, Jenny, and Linda talked about White male privilege in the context of it being a dominant force in their institutions, while women were considered to be outsiders. Unless you were a White male, hard work alone was not enough to be successful. This culture was the norm for them, and their contributions were devalued as a result of their gender and, for Elle in particular, of White male privilege.

Elle's experience was one that combined gender and racial stereotypes creating for her a greater disadvantage within the institution. Racial stereotypes combine with gender stereotypes to further disadvantage women of color (Madden, 2005), and they face multiple forms of marginalization, as racism and sexism constitute "twin barriers" (Tyson, 2002, p. 468) that obscure the path toward leadership. Elle articulated this sentiment early on in the interview when she described the difficulty in separating the stereotypes, as "racism and sexism may be so fused in a given situation that it is difficult to tell which is which" (Madden, 2005, p. 7). In a conversation that followed the interview with Elle, she discussed how women in general are devalued but that women of color are disregarded to an even greater extent, so within this group of women, there are still differences, and those differences are based on race. Being White in and of itself creates an advantage for White women, and while women in general are stereotyped based on the female gender role, women of color indeed encounter two sets of stereotypes that they must break through in order to be recognized. According to Harvey (1999), leadership qualities are skills that help to promote some individuals but not others:

The most obvious such characteristic in America's colleges and universities has been race—the history and legacy of racial discrimination in America has meant that, except in very isolated situations, African Americans have not received equal consideration for positions, especially positions of power and authority, in predominantly White colleges and universities. (p. 1)

Interestingly, all three women articulated concerns over job security and seemed to rely on external forces to help them feel secure and to make it more difficult for them to be terminated. Linda relied on the union for job security, and she and Elle both talked about the security that comes with tenure. Jenny felt faced with the absolute notion that she would be fired if she stayed in her director's position, and her inclination to leave was motivated by the security that awaited her in the form of both a union and tenure at the high school. All three women also talked about suing based on discrimination, although none of them actually did. When asked why they chose not to, Elle conceded that nothing good would come of it, and Jenny simply wanted Larry to stop defaming her and took more immediate steps to remedy that. For Linda, it was fear that stopped her—fear of retaliation and ultimately losing her job. Liss' (1975) study of discrimination against women in one higher education setting provided evidence for the rationale not to speak up, and various reasons were put forth including fear of retaliation or exclusion, and fear of negative performance evaluations or increased work load. Siskind and Kearns (1997) concluded that women will fail to speak up if the culture is one that marginalizes women, and that's exactly how their scenarios played out. Succinctly put, "...even when you win, you lose..." (Liss, 1975, p. 221)

Surely, the notion of a "labyrinth" (Eagly & Carli, 2007) captures the lived

experiences of Elle, Jenny, and Linda who faced a maze of complexities and obstacles along the leadership pathway. Stereotypes colored the things they were supposed to do as well as the ways in which they were expected to do them, and these constraints limited opportunities for them and surely put obstacles in their path.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Three limitations of the study are brought forth for discussion. First and foremost, the findings are not generalizable. They reflect the lived experiences of three female administrators who have worked in the higher education setting at varying levels and at institutions located in the northeastern United States in or near large cities. Whether or not similar findings would result if such research were conducted with faculty, staff, or strictly with women of color is not known. According to Coffey and Atkinson (1996) however, the inability to generalize findings is acceptable and does not minimize the findings of this particular study: “Qualitative research captures multiple versions of multiple realities. We do not need to reconcile the particular with the universal...” (p. 163).

The study participants were all over the age of 40, and each shared examples of their lived experiences which reflected the presence of gender stereotypes in the workplace. Elle, who is more than 10 years younger than Linda and 15 years younger than Jenny, did not experience the overt hostility that the others experienced, but it is not clear why. While this may serve as evidence that overt forms of discrimination have been replaced by more subtle forms, it could also be an indication that the presence and impacts of stereotyping are decreasing in the workplace.

Lastly, researcher bias is a limitation of this study. The researcher, who has

worked in higher education for more than thirty years, has experienced blatant hostility, stereotyping, and sexual harassment in the workplace and is particularly sensitive to the conditions under which some women must work. Care was taken, however, throughout the interview and member-check processes to clarify with the individual participants the meaning *they* intended to convey as they answered the interview questions.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Several of the findings lend themselves to further investigation and research:

1. All three study participants proclaimed that some of the worst treatment they had received had been from other women. Research on backlash, retaliation, and mistreatment of female employees by female supervisors not only in a higher education setting but in any work setting should be pursued to further explore the nature of this phenomenon.
2. This study explored the lived experiences of women leaders in higher education over the age of forty and with no fewer than fifteen years of work experience. In order to gauge whether or not this kind of treatment of women is diminishing for the younger generation of women, it would be informative to explore their experiences of stereotyping and related obstacles in the workplace.
3. According to Elle, Jenny, and Linda, both women and men engaged in gendered ways of treating and interacting with people, and Elle explained that it's the culture that drives that and not necessarily one's gender. Exploring the norms and their underlying messages within the higher education setting could be examined to assess the actual power and control contained in these cultural norms and how they play out for women and men. In addition, these differences could be explored for women in particular,

with an emphasis on difference by race.

4. While identity management was a topic for all study participants, Elle, much more so than Linda and Jenny, described to a greater degree the extent to which she navigates gender and racial stereotypes with hopes of avoiding them. This observed difference in the presence of stereotype threat could be investigated further to explore the magnitude and the consequences of stereotype threat for women along racial lines.
5. Given that an overarching goal of this research is to call attention to disparities in the perception and treatment of leaders based on gender, research could be pursued to explore institutional differences across institutions where women are prominent as leaders and where women are absent from leadership roles. Such research could explore cultural beliefs and institutional practices in an attempt to isolate conditions that promote or inhibit the appointment and promotion of women as leaders.
6. To further complement the research described above, and, again, since all women referred to subtle forms of discrimination, it would be helpful to isolate specific sources of this subtle discrimination. Areas to investigate could include cultural norms as well as formal and informal practices and identifying effective ways of addressing these climate issues.

### **Implications for Practice**

Elle, Jenny, and Linda experienced the higher education environment to be one that supports and promotes differential treatment of women and men and views the sexes through a gendered lens. Consequently, women are not given the same opportunities as men nor are they recognized to the extent that men are. The literature on women in higher education is consistent with these themes (Bilimoria, Joy, & Liang, 2008; Dominici et al.,

2009; Twombly & Rosser, 2002). This disadvantaged positioning of women results in fewer women in leadership roles due to the incongruity between the gender role and the leadership role (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

A consistent theme from the study participants was one that paints the culture as an obstacle to women's advancement. In order to explore this notion and improve upon it, institutions can evaluate their cultural norms relative to acceptable behavior and explore their definitions of effective leadership. Since women don't necessarily fare well in leadership roles when they are defined in masculine terms (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995), institutions should look closely at what they deem to be good leadership and redefine it if it is found that the description is stereotypically male. Along the same lines, institutions should explore the relationship between culture and women's advancement and identify cultural conditions that promote or inhibit women as leaders. Informal practices and cultural norms should be included in this evaluation, as answers to these questions also lie in an institution's culture, climate, and context (Kosser & Zonia, 1993).

To assist with an evaluation of current conditions within an institution, a self-evaluation can be undertaken in which a distribution by gender of various job classifications is completed in order to see if women are represented in leadership roles or if they are pocketed into certain types of roles and into particular disciplines. The evaluation of pay scales by gender should be a part of that assessment. Additionally, examining performance evaluations, hiring and promotion patterns as well as terminations can provide concrete evidence of whether women and men are treated equally within the institution.

Formal structures and policies at the institution level must also be taken into



consideration. Issues of sexual harassment, retaliation, and a hostile work environment were conveyed by two of the three study participants. The federal government's Title IX legislation covers these conditions and prohibits discrimination based on sex in any and all education programs. Institutions are required to conduct Title IX training for employees, and this mandate must be taken seriously. This training should include and convey examples not only of overt and blatant forms of discrimination and retaliation but also the more subtle forms. Consistent with Linda's experience of her institution's Title IX officer, those that an institution puts in charge of safeguarding and enforcing such policies must be trained appropriately and must take claims of harassment seriously and without gender bias.

Human resource officers also have an obligation to police the treatment of employees and to establish and enforce policies and procedures that enable employees to file complaints without the fear of retaliation or backlash. A norm must be established within institutions which conveys that discrimination, retaliation, and harassment will not be tolerated under *any* circumstances, and that stance must be upheld for all to see. Policies can be adopted that are family-friendly making it acceptable for both men and women to address their family obligations and priorities and to reduce the impression that these responsibilities are primarily ones that are a woman's concern to manage. Jenny and Linda were both viewed in stereotypical ways with regard to marriage and children, and institutions should assume responsibility for eliminating that stereotype in the workplace.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the increased presence of women in leadership roles, the findings of this

particular study point to a higher education environment that is steeped in tradition and where stereotypes of women are prominent and work in overt as well as subtle ways to reduce their opportunities and color the perceptions of their performance. Women must strike a balance between feminine and masculine behavior and know when and how to move back and forth between the two and how to tailor their responses to the expectations of the organization (Christman & McClellan, 2008). According to Jacobs (1996), women in higher education have been disadvantaged along every step of their career path and suffer a cumulative disadvantage as a result.

The paucity of women in leadership roles is a reflection of the poor treatment they receive which can prompt them to make the decision to leave their positions (Johnsrud, Heck & Rosser, 2000), as happened with all three study participants. Based on Johnsrud, Heck, and Rosser's (2000) research, administrators' perceptions of work life had a direct and powerful effect on their morale and impacted their decisions to seek employment elsewhere. The researchers' work determined that administrators' morale was impacted by their perceptions that they were being treated fairly, that their opinions were valued, and that their work was meaningful. Administrators want to be recognized for their expertise and accomplishments and to participate in relevant activities within their organizations. Johnsrud and Rosser's (1999) study also demonstrated that trust and communication from one's supervisor impacted morale and a sense of purpose in one's work, while Lindsey's (1999) study revealed examples of women who faced the challenge of working for an insecure supervisor who supported them privately but not publicly and stole their ideas. Some women also shared that they had considered filing a discrimination lawsuit but decided not to due to fear of retaliation. It was acknowledged

that men rebound easily from problems, while women and minorities do not.

These themes in the literature were also themes in this study. Elle, Jenny, and Linda's stories reflect the perception of them in gendered ways, and the incongruity between the female gender role and the leadership role reduced their presence as leaders and caused them to be viewed first as women. According to Eagly and Karau (2002), a lessening of these stereotypes requires either a change to the gender role stereotype or a change to the leadership stereotype. Since gender role stereotypes have persisted despite an obvious societal role change for women, it is suggested that work be done within organizations to modify the perception of what it takes to be a leader. Until it becomes acceptable that leaders operate by displaying a combination of masculine and feminine qualities, women will continue to suffer a disadvantage. Having women leaders in place will actually *help* to make that happen (Ely, 1995). It then becomes the obligation of our colleges and universities to address these gender inequities and the cultural norms that sustain them.

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